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A Comparative Analysis of Arrangements of Armenian Folk Tunes for the
Piano by Armenian composers

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I declare that I developed this thesis on Comparative Analysis of Armenian Folk Tunes for the Piano by Armenian Composers under supervision and worked independently using the works of the sources and literature listed. I also declare that this work was not published under a different or similar title.

Prague, April 2016

signature

I would like to thank **God Almighty** for the gift of music and His innumerable blessings. I would also like to express gratitude towards **Dr. Michal Nedelka**, my thesis supervisor, for his help, support, encouragement, and guidance. Many thanks also to **Ms. Talar Agopian** for proofreading and editing this thesis. I would finally like to thank the administration and staff of the **Kohar Library** in Beirut, Lebanon, for freely providing sheet music, and also for their time, efforts, and kind cooperation.

ABSTRACT

Armenian music of today is largely influenced by Armenian folk music. Composers such as Sayat Nova and Gomidas Vartabed have left behind numerous tunes that are still sung today by Armenians whether in Armenia or the Armenian diaspora. This thesis comparatively analyzed piano arrangements of Armenian folk tunes by Armenian composers. The aim of this thesis is bifold: to find elements of piano arrangements that are commonly used by different composers and to introduce the riches of Armenian music to the Czech and International music communities. The comparative analyses revealed the existence of elements such as orchestral simulations, melodic and rhythmic variations, representations, composing introductions, and different accompaniment styles among the arrangements of the same folk tunes by different composers or different folk tunes by the same composer at different levels of difficulty. Hence, the first aim of this thesis was verified, with the hopes of the second aim also being met and Armenian music being spread to all musical circles around the world.

KEYWORDS

Armenian music, folk tunes, arrangements, analysis, composers

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Introduction

Armenian folk songs have been an inherent part of Armenian culture and tradition throughout history. Just like the Armenian language, religion, cuisine, costumes, art, and dance, Armenian music is also a tool that serves to unify the Armenian people both in motherland Armenia and the diaspora, strengthen the sense of patriotism and nationalism, and help maintain a vast and rich culture to be transferred to future generations.

Armenian folk songs, like folk songs of any other culture, represent aspects of the country, its geographical features, the people, their traditions, and the culture itself. Topics in Armenian folk songs seem to cover all areas of life, ranging from themes of nationalism, praising the motherland Armenia, to nature and animals, as well as relationships, family, and love.

Armenian music has developed throughout the years, meeting the expansion of music in general, be that in terms of instrumentation, harmonization, or style. Armenian folk songs have also taken part in the development of Armenian music. Needless to say, the age-old melodies of these folk songs stay the same from generation to generation; however, Armenian composers of different eras and time periods have arranged these famous tunes for choir, chamber ensemble, orchestra, or solo instruments.

As an Armenian, born and raised in Lebanon, currently living in the Czech Republic, I have learned how to be an Armenian at a distance, through songs, stories, language, and culture. As a piano student, I have always enjoyed playing music by Armenian composers, which has always allowed me to be in touch with my Armenian origins, despite the geographical distance that separated me from my motherland. Armenian folk songs, which I have sung growing up, arranged for the piano have particularly caught my attention, as they combine familiar tunes of my culture with the instrument I play.

Therefore, this thesis focuses on arrangements of Armenian folk tunes, specifically arranged for the piano, by Armenian composers. A list of 11 such arrangements are comparatively analyzed in order to learn about the elements and techniques used to arrange folk tunes for the piano.

The main underlying question of this thesis is whether or not specific elements and techniques of arrangement exist. In other words, do composers simply take a folk tune and play it on the piano, adapting it to the capabilities and limitations of the instrument, or are there certain elements of arrangements, particularly for the piano, that are commonly used by Armenian composers?

In order to answer this question, 11 piano arrangements of four Armenian folk tunes have been comparatively analyzed. While the composers of the original folk tunes are either Sayat Nova or Gomidas Vartabed, the arrangements are the work of nine different arrangers. The reason why different arrangements of the same tunes have been studied is to enhance the comparative aspect of the analysis at the levels of difficulty (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and instrumentation (one piano, two pianos). Studying different arrangements by different composers of the same tunes also allows for the extraction of different elements and techniques of piano arrangements used by different composers on the same tune, which is the main target of this thesis.

Method

The method used for the analysis of these 11 tunes is a twofold design: within analysis and between analysis. Within analysis is the analysis of a piece of music (in this case each arrangement) in itself, studying its different musical elements. Between analysis is comparing different pieces of music together on common or different elements found in both. For both within and between analyses, this thesis presents analyses of melody, harmony, rhythm, accompaniment, form, and pianistic techniques. Melodic analysis includes ornamentation, variations in the original melody, and playing the melody with the left hand; harmonic analysis includes

distinction between classical versus 20th century harmony, as well as explaining melodic alterations within a harmonic context; analysis of accompaniment studies the different types of chordal and rhythmic structures, their representations and imitations; analysis of form follows the phrases of the original tune and how they are treated in the arrangement, introductions, conclusions, and special forms, such as theme and variations; and pianistic techniques establish the level of difficulty and study elements such as crossing hands while playing and using different registers of the piano.

Aims

On that account, the aims of this thesis are multifold. The main aim is to discover different elements and techniques of arranging for the piano using comparative analysis of piano arrangements of Armenian folk tunes by Armenian composers. However, there are aims at the educational and cultural level as well. Educationally, this thesis aims at serving as a methodological guide, teaching techniques of piano arrangements through popular folk tunes for composers and composition students. Culturally, this thesis aims to introduce age-old Armenian folk tunes to the new generation, Armenians and non-Armenians alike, and to uphold the Armenian music and culture and introduce it to the Czech musical community.

Definition of terms

1. Within analysis: the analysis of a piece of music in itself, studying its different musical elements.
2. Between analysis: comparing different pieces of music together on common or different elements found in both.
3. Khaz: the khaz system (also known as the neume system) is a system of notation where symbols are placed above the text of the song indicating pitch, rhythm, nuances, and cadences.
4. Minstrel: a wandering musician of the Middle Ages, often of low status and servant at court.

5. Troubadour: an educated amateur poet or wandering musician of a high social rank, who composed elaborate lyrics of courtly love between 1100 and 1300, which had an extensive influence on Western poetry and culture.
6. Ashough: Armenian for troubadour.
7. Armenian Diaspora: the Armenians who do not live in Armenia. After the 1915 genocide, Armenians were dispersed all over the world, and today we have Armenian communities in almost every country in the world.
8. Saz: Armenian string instrument. It is a long-necked fretted lute of the tanbur family. Its pear-shaped resonator is carved from a single piece of wood, or it is fitted together from wooden staves. It has a thin wooden soundboard with small holes. It is played with a plectrum.
9. Duduk: Armenian woodwind instrument. A single or double reed wind instrument made of apricot wood with a sound that has a human-like voice quality. It has a cylindrical wooden pipe, a broad reed, and nine holes (eight finger-holes and one thumb-hole). This instrument is equally used for slow lyrical tunes (accompanying folk songs) and faster dance-tunes, and it is also played solo. The tuning is basically non-tempered diatonic, though chromatic notes can be obtained by partially opening or closing the finger holes.
10. Zourna: Armenian woodwind instrument. It takes many forms but is most commonly a conical wooden tube with a double reed. The body of the instrument is made of a single conical piece of wood, widening towards the end, which is bell-shaped. Many different kinds of wood are known to have been used. In earlier times, apricot was the most common. The body has seven finger-holes and a thumb-hole. The zourna is used for weddings, dances, celebrations, and many other situations.
11. Dhol: Armenian double-headed cylindrical drum. One membrane is thick and produces a deep sound, while the other one is thinner, generating a higher pitch. The membranes are made of sheepskin or goatskin, which are tensioned to each other by a variety of zigzag lacing around the cylinder. It is either played with two wooden sticks (one usually thicker than the other) on both membranes, or with the fingers and palms on one membrane. A variety of dances and songs are accompanied by the dhol. Many rhythmic patterns are used, giving the music an improvisatory character and its beat.

12. Kamancha: Armenian string instrument, a cone-shaped body string instrument with three strings tuned in fourths and played with a bow, using the German-style bowing often employed by bass players. The normal playing position for the kamancha is on the left knee, using the left hand for fingering and the right one for bowing¹.

Literature

The literature used for this thesis comes from three different sources. First, there are books about Armenian music, Armenian folk music, and Gomidas, one of the two composers whose compositions are studied in this work. In order to explore the history of Armenian music in general and Armenian folk music in particular, and in order to provide a background to the music which would be analyzed, it was essential to use information found in these books before delving into the analyses of the arrangements.

One of these books that talked about the history of Armenian music is Հայ Երաժշտութիւն (*Hay Yerajshdoutyoun*), which translates into *Armenian Music*, by Suni, published in Yerevan by Museum of Literature and Art Publication in 2005. Armenian music and its history are vast topics, which occupy volumes of books on the shelves of libraries, and this book by Suni was greatly beneficial to capture the most important aspects of the history of Armenian music for the purposes of this thesis.

The book *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music* written by none other than Gomidas himself (published in Surrey by Curzon Press in 1998) gives insight into both Armenian sacred and folk music, and for the purposes of this thesis it was a valuable asset to survey the history and characteristics of Armenian folk music. In this book Gomidas lists the topics found in Armenian folk music, and he describes how peasants with no musical training have come together and created these folk tunes that have survived the test of time and are still sung even today.

¹ *Traditional Music Instruments of Armenia* (accessed January 16, 2016); available from <http://www.face-music.ch>

Essays on Armenian Music, edited by Nercessian, and published in London by Kahn and Averill Press in 1978, is another source that provides the background and history of Armenian music in general and folk music in particular. In this book one can also see the concept that folk songs were not reserved for the elite but came alive through the cries of peasants and plowmen. *Essays on Armenian Music* also describes the Armenian “khaz” (neume) system in depth, from its onset to disappearance at the expense of modern notation.

The in depth biography of Gomidas was written in the book Կոմիտասի Հանճարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*), which translated into *The Genius of Gomidas*, by Manougian, published in New York by For Our Times Publication in 1985. This book not only gave insight about historical facts, but it also conveyed the passion Gomidas had for collecting, teaching, composing, and arranging Armenian folk music.

The second source is a collection of articles and theses found on the Internet. Two of these articles focused on the life of Sayat Nova, the second main composer whose works are studied in this thesis, his works, and the tradition of Armenian ashoughs in general. One of the two articles is titled *Sayat Nova (Haroutyoun Sayatyan)* and the second is titled *Սայաթ Նովա Գենսագրություն (Sayat Nova Gensacroutyoun)*, which is translated into *Sayat Nova Biography*. Another article, “Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)” by Vann (2015) not only listed the basic elements and characteristics of Armenian folk music, but it also discussed possibilities of arranging the music of Gomidas for solo piano or an ensemble of instruments. Vann also discussed the outspread of Armenian music from its original Eastern roots all the way to the Western world largely due to the sojourn of Gomidas in Berlin where he studied musical harmony and composition.

Two online theses discussed Armenian folk tunes and their compositional styles, as well as Armenian keyboard music, namely the piano, which is the main

instrument of focus in this thesis. The first of these 2 theses "Exploring Armenian Keyboard Music: Roots to Modern Times" by Berberian (2010) has a lengthy section about the life and works of Sayat Nova, in addition to music composed for the piano by different Armenian composers. The second, "Sayat Nova and Armenian Ashoogh Musical Tradition" by Injejikian, dates much earlier – 1990 – but was still very useful into understanding Sayat Nova's music. On the other hand, Christofakis describes the Armenian duduk and its importance in Armenian music in his thesis "The Music That Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015).

Finally, the arrangements of the folk tunes under study were gathered from many piano books of Armenian music and arrangements of folk tunes. Access to these books was generously granted by the Kohar Library of Armenian music in Beirut, Lebanon for the purposes of this thesis. The books contained the sheet music of the piano arrangements of folk tunes that were analyzed for this thesis, and some provided short biographies of the arrangers, which were translated into English.

1 Armenian Music

1.1 History of Armenian Music

Armenian music has historically been divided into three categories: religious, folk, and professional. Folk and sacred music, though serving different roles in traditional Armenian culture, have developed through the centuries and flourished simultaneously². However, most of Armenia's music, regardless of 'categorization,' has certain common and identifiable features. It is, for example, a historically monophonic music, based on shifting modal centers and unmetered singing. It is characterized by an emotional component where motion or sounds conform to feelings and sentiments that are generated within the soul, making the national music of Armenia directly representative of its citizens and their history. The nature of Armenia is a large influence when it comes to motion and feeling, as it determines how one lives. For example, when living in the mountains one is accustomed to heavy winters and storms. When listening to the music of the mountainous villages of Armenia one would hear rough, even violent melodies. Amongst those living in the plains one would find calm, tender melodies, which are directly reflective of their locale³.

Armenian melodies follow a pattern of rich, distinctive, yet free and independent punctuation and accentuation. In other words, the musical meter and stress produce the tonal picture. The musical meter depicts the sentiment of the piece,

² CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

³ VANN, K., "Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)". *Լրաբեր Հասարակական Գիտություններ*, no.1 (2015): 318-338. ISSN 0320-8117

with regular patterned pulsation, while the stresses depict motion with diverse timbres. Since song is derived from language, the words dictate the pattern of pulsation, allowing the melody to determine the meter. The form of song is unique to the land it comes from⁴.

Although the music of Armenia is closely related to the music of surrounding countries and cultures in scales and harmonies, it still maintains its own distinct musical identity. Slight deviations in the melodic lines, including phrasing and the use of embellishments help to distinguish Armenian music from that of other countries. Also, Armenian instruments give the music a distinctive character. The rhythmic idioms played on instruments such as the *duduk*, *zurna*, and *shvi*, are made to imitate the natural inflection of the language. The sound created by these instruments is therefore uniquely Armenian⁵.

In different historical periods, Armenian musicians devised and used different notation systems. The oldest reference to a system of notes comes from the 5th century. Saint Sahak is said to have used “singer’s letters”. Unfortunately, we do not know what those “singer’s letters” were; however, from the 9th and 10th centuries we have numerous manuscripts which use the “khaz” system, which is uniquely Armenian. The khaz system consists of symbols, which are written above the text to indicate pitch, rhythm, nuances, and cadences. The khaz system became unpopular in the middle of the 16th century, and by the 18th century it was completely unusable. At the beginning of the 19th century, Limonjian, an Armenian composer, developed a new system of Armenian notation and named it after himself. His system kept the

⁴ VANN, K., “Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)”. *Լրաբեր Հասարակական Գիտություններ*, no.1 (2015): 318-338. ISSN 0320-8117

⁵ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

symbols of the khaz system for the seven notes, but it introduced improvements and novelties as well in an attempt to make notation more accessible, simple, and modern. Musicologists today, Armenian and non-Armenian alike, study the khaz system to try and discover more its meaning, significance, and resolve dilemmas that have been created as the system has been passed down in writing, but its explanation has been lost with the death of those who used it in the past centuries⁶. The Armenian khaz could be written quickly, without the need of a staff paper, much like shorthand⁷. Even though Armenian music was notated using the khaz system, it never ceased to be improvised. For this reasons, one can find many different manuscripts of the same song, with minor (or sometimes major) differences⁸.

Armenian music was largely folk music sung in cities and villages during special occasions, liturgical music sung at church, or court music sung for the pleasure of officials. The Soviet Union brought music to Armenia in a new way, making it a scholarly activity. Music went from an oral tradition, played in the villages, and passed down through generations to something that was studied, practiced, and learned in a cosmopolitan context. The folk traditions created a foundation for contemporary Armenian composers' compositional styles⁹.

⁶ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), pp. 7-8.

⁷ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), p. 15.

⁸ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), p. 37.

⁹ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

1.2 Armenian Folk Music

Folk songs are songs that are composed by the people instinctively and immediately. The folk songs of each country or nation are very unique to their own culture, have certain characteristics, and possess a certain mood that it is not possible to confuse them with folk songs of other countries or cultures¹⁰.

Armenian folk music has always figured largely in the music of Armenian composers. American-born Alan Hovhannes, Soviet composer Aram Khachaturian, and Arno Babajanian, to name a few, were all strongly influenced by characteristics, harmonic map, and folk-like elements that define Armenian music¹¹.

Armenian folk music encompasses everything that reflects the feelings and mind of the Armenian people. Armenian folk songs are also various expressive mirrors, which separately reflect the position, climate, nature, and life of the diverse locales in which they were born¹². As Armenian musicologist and composer Gomidas states:

What provides the subject matter for national folk songs? Could it be the proud mountains, the deep valleys, the fields, the varied climate, the many historical events and happenings, the internal and external life of the people? Yes, indeed, all of these

¹⁰ GOMIDAS. *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*. (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 159.

¹¹ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

¹² BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

constitute the materials for a national music, in a word, everything that affects the feelings and the mind of that nation¹³.

The Armenian people sing in all occasions, whether sadness or happiness, love or farewells, hence the many different types of Armenian folk songs¹⁴. In the Armenian villages everyone knows how to sing, good or bad, because they all take part in singing and creating songs. No one actually knows who created the song, because they all composed together. No one knows even if he himself has composed a certain song, since composing songs is a collective activity. No one knows how he composed a song, because composing is spontaneous. No one known when the song was composed, as each minute brings with it a new disposition. One melodic line leads to the other, an idea leads to the text, poems give way to melodic development, and collectively a song is composed, flowing spontaneously and instinctively from the spirit of the people, with no preparation¹⁵.

Armenian folk songs were traditionally sung as solo, two solos, choir, or two choirs. In the case of two solos or two choirs, the melodies were still sung in unison, but the solos or choirs took turns in singing the phrases of the song. Sometimes when the first singer started the song with a very high-pitched sound, which was above the normal tessitura of the average peasant, or with a very low-pitched note, again outside the boundaries of the average singer, the second singer would sing in a different tonality, and when their singing overlapped, it would give the impression of some harmony or even polyphony, and that is the only harmonic or polyphonic example one can find in Armenian folk music¹⁶.

¹³ GOMIDAS. *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*. (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 23.

¹⁴ MANOUGIAN, T. Կոմիդասի Հանձարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*). (New Work: For Our Times Publication, 1985), p. 22.

¹⁵ GOMIDAS. *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*. (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), pp. 25-26.

¹⁶ GOMIDAS. *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*. (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 45.

Folk songs are not reserved for the elite; they are for everyone. Every villager knows how to sing, and they can all compose songs instinctively and spontaneously, without musical or theoretical knowledge. Armenian folk songs contain “the exclamations of the plowmen, orders shouted to the oxen, [and] words of prayer and thanksgiving to the Creator”¹⁷. Most folk songs, however, were short-lived because they dealt with a particular, passing situation, or because new songs came along and erased the former ones from memory¹⁸.

1.3 Sayat Nova

Sayat Nova, "Hunter of songs", is the name given to the great Armenian troubadour Harutyun Sayatyan (1712 - 1795), who excelled equally as poet, singer-songwriter, and diplomat. He was born to a peasant family in the village of Sanahin, not far from Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasian nation of Georgia. His father was Armenian, who had immigrated to Aleppo and then Tiflis; his mother was an Armenian born in Georgia, who lived in the Armenian quarter of Tiflis. His date of birth and details about his life are largely debated by music historians and historians in general. Most of the information is deduced from Sayat Nova's own autobiography.

As a boy, Harutyun gained regional recognition for his fine singing voice, his interpretations of folk songs, and his emerging virtuosity on the kamancha. He was also recognized as the author of beautiful lyric poetry. When his family moved to Tiflis, Sayat Nova was employed as an apprentice to a weaver, an experience that he reflected later in his songs. By the age of 18, Sayat Nova was already performing as a minstrel, and by age 30 he was well known for his proficiency on many instruments.

¹⁷ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), p. 21.

¹⁸ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), p. 25.

This would eventually enable him to perform in the court of Heraclius II of Georgia, where he also worked as a diplomat, becoming the King's trusted advisor and helping to forge an alliance between Georgia, Armenia and Shirvan against the Persian Empire. His fluency in Georgian, Persian, Arabic, Armenian and Azerbaijani allowed him to perform for the widest possible audience and to gain fame outside of his own ethnic group¹⁹.

Sayat Nova married Marmar, an Armenlan girl from the district of Lori, Armenia, sometime during 1759-60. They had four children, two sons: Melkon and Ohan, and two daughters: Sarah and Mariam. Marmar died in 1768, and soon after Sayat Nova accepted celibacy and entered the Haghpad monastery to become a member of its order²⁰.

The known body of songs attributed to Sayat Nova numbers about 220, although the actual volume of work is likely to have been in the thousands. His chief themes were social ones, notably the liberation of his people. The subject of love was also basic, sometimes expressed with touching directness or in striking imagery, always tragic and melodramatic. In addition, he gave prominence to social, philosophical, and ethical themes, celebrating human virtues and censuring negative aspects of social and individual existence. It should be noted that these works, though notated in the 19th century, have been largely passed down as an oral tradition. His major songs are not happy ones. But enough of his life is known for us to realize that their complaints derive from defiance in the face of genuine suffering. It is a fact that, to this day, it would be difficult to find an Armenian who does not know a song by

¹⁹ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

²⁰ INJEKIAN, H., "Sayat Nova and Armenian Ashoogh Musical Tradition" (1990). (Master's Thesis. McGill University).

Sayat Nova, since his songs are widely known in any Armenian community and are an important part of every Armenian folk musician²¹.

Sayat Nova's "Daftar", a compilation of all the "khagh"s (poems) he composed, was completed and sealed by Sayat Nova himself in 1759. Between the years 1755 and 1758 some pages from the collection for the Daftar were lost, and it is believed that Sayat Nova rewrote them from memory to complete the Daftar. Two sacred manuscripts also exist in Sayat Nova's own handwriting. One is a collection of religious poems written by the ashough himself; the other is a copy of the Book of Lamentations by Krikor Naregatsi, possibly completed between 1759 and 1761, the time in which Sayat Nova lived in the Armenian church of Enzeli, Iran. His melodies and tunes, though, were only transmitted orally from generation to generation, and they were first presented in a concert in 1913, around 150 years from the time in which Sayat Nova composed them. Such an extended time interval raises questions as to the authenticity of these melodies. Although some music scholars have claimed that these melodies are Persian, Armenian music scholar Tahmizian demonstrated the unity of the musical language of the tunes ascribed to Sayat Nova, through analyses of melodic contours, cadences, and rhythmic patterns, establishing that these tunes are uniquely Armenian, albeit influenced by surrounding cultures and traditions. Tahmizian's conclusion also included the fact that these melodies were composed by the same person, Sayat Nova. Some of his khaghs are translated into Russian, Georgian, German, French, Ukrainian, English, and Arabic. The very first piano arrangement of Sayat Nova's khaghs was in 1935, and since then his melodies continue to be the source of many arrangements, orchestrations, and choral works. After 300 years, Sayat Nova melodies still surface from time to time making him an undying musical icon of the Armenian culture²².

²¹ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

²² INJEKIAN, H., "Sayat Nova and Armenian Ashoogh Musical Tradition" (1990). (Master's Thesis. McGill University).

Ashough, an Arabic word meaning lover, was a popular Islamic tradition, which became incorporated in the Armenian culture starting the 16th century. Ashoughs were usually illiterate and had to work in the courts, adapting and adjusting their repertoire to please their patron. For instance, during the Ottoman reign, ashoughs were not allowed to use the Armenian language, and hence they only sang in Turkish. An ashough was supposed to compose in a certain rhythmical pattern consistent with other ashoughs and to perform both solo and in an ensemble as both singer and instrumentalist²³. The tradition of ashough singing developed after the Middle Ages due to the fact that religious and political leaders were enchanted by it, and it continued until the end of the 18th century. However, until the beginning of the 18th century, ashoughs were reserved only for the court, while starting with Sayat Nova, the ashough tradition became accessible to everyone, since Sayat Nova was expelled from court and started singing on the streets and in public gatherings. At its very beginning, the ashough tradition used only pagan-heroic themes, followed by religious themes in the years to come. During Sayat Nova's time, however, romantic and national-patriotic themes also developed²⁴.

1.4 Gomidas Vartabed

Born in 1869 in Kütahya, Asia Minor, Sghomon Sghomonian was born into a musical family. Aside from being naturally gifted singers, both his parents performed and even composed songs that were admired throughout the town in which

²³ INJEKIAN, H., "Sayat Nova and Armenian Ashough Musical Tradition" (1990). (Master's Thesis. McGill University).

²⁴ SUNI, G. Հայ Երաժշտութիւն (Hay Yerajshdoutyoun). (Yerevan: Museum of Literature and Art Publication, 2005), pp 90-91.

they lived²⁵. Orphaned as a young child, Sghomonian was offered the opportunity to study at a seminary in the Holy See of Etchmiadzin Cathedral in Armenia in 1881, where he began his formal studies in the liturgical music of the Armenian Apostolic church²⁶. The Holy Catholicos George IV had just established a seminary school and asked that an orphan be brought to study in the school. Sghomon was selected out of 20 orphans in the town and went on to begin his studies at Holy Etchmiadzin to become a priest. Having lost his mother when he was one year old, and having become an orphan at the age of 11 after the passing away of his father, Sghomon didn't even know how to speak Armenian; he just spoke Turkish. When he was sent to Etchmiadzin, the Catholicos was concerned about the fact that this child cannot even speak Armenian. However, Sghomon was raised in a musical family and was very familiar with Armenian songs. Young Sghomon told the Catholicos that although he couldn't speak the language, he could sing in Armenian²⁷. The Catholicos was moved to tears by his performance, and so Sghomon was immediately accepted as a student. He became skilled in the modern method of musical notation employed at Etchmiadzin. In September of 1893 he was appointed music teacher at the seminary, where he taught church music with both the Armenian khaz system and European notation system. In 1894, he was ordained as a celibate priest of the Armenian Apostolic Church and adopted the name Gomidas after the revered seventh-century Catholicos, poet, and hymn composer²⁸.

²⁵ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

²⁶ VANN, K., "Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)". *Լրաբեր Հասարակական Գիտություններ*, no.1 (2015): 318-338. ISSN 0320-8117

²⁷ MANOUGIAN, T. Կոմիտասի Հանճարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*). (New Work: For Our Times Publication, 1985), p. 5.

²⁸ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the

Having no knowledge in European harmony, and having just finished tutorship at the seminary in Armenian liturgical singing, Gomidas collected and recorded ancient Armenian folk songs from the Ararat plain and harmonized them – to the extent of his knowledge – to be sung by the student choir, which he himself had formed at the seminary. Consequently, Gomidas was helped by a well-known Armenian benefactor, Kapriel Jamparjian, to continue his musical studies in Berlin. While in Berlin he was among the first to join the International Musical Society, where he lectured on Armenian music and published an article about the same topic in the first issue of the society's journal. His lectures, articles, and concerts were enthusiastically accepted all over Europe, especially Paris²⁹.

Upon returning from his musical studies in Berlin, Gomidas resumed his position teaching in the seminary, was appointed Headmaster of Music at Holy Etchmiadzin, and conducted the multi-voiced chorus of the Cathedral³⁰. Gomidas also traveled all over the country, listening to and recording details about Armenian folk songs and dances in various villages. In September 1899, at the age of 30, Gomidas returned to the Etchmiadzin Monastery, where he put his musical talents and training to immediate use. In less than a year Gomidas not only formed the choir and orchestra of the monastery, but he also improved the way music was taught there altogether³¹.

Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

²⁹ NERCESSIAN, V., introduction to Armenian Sacred and Folk Music, ed. Vrej N. Nercessian (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), pp.15-18.

³⁰ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music that Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

³¹ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

Gomidas' most prolific period was between the years 1904 and 1914. During these years he traveled to Armenian villages throughout present-day Armenia and Turkey, observing, listening, and transcribing over 4,000 peasant and sacred songs in Armenian, Turkish, and Kurdish. Unfortunately, only about 1,500 survived the genocide. The development of Armenian folk songs was his passion. He believed that to see the soul of a people and to really understand them, you must see them dance. The rhythm and the movement are representative of who they are and what they have been through. The song shows the inflection of the language, and when the two are combined, they depict the true essence of the people. In addition to transcribing folk songs from his travels around the country, Gomidas composed many of his own works including works for solo piano, piano with mixed choir, and piano with solo voice³².

Gomidas' ambitious career came to a tragic end in 1915 when, on April 24, the Young Turks, a Turkish nationalist political party, gathered and deported over one hundred Armenian intellectuals and political figures. What followed was a brutal massacre that spurred a large-scale Genocide against the Armenians, committed behind a mask of atrocities that made up World War I. Gomidas was included in the group of intellectuals deported. However, his ties to Western Europe and highly regarded reputation had afforded him influential connections, most notably, the United States' Ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau, who was able to intervene and save him from execution³³. However, during the exile, Gomidas witnessed the extermination and torture of many of his closest friends and compatriots. While he himself survived the genocide, he was never able to recover from the atrocities he

³² CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

³³ VANN, K., "Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)". *Լրաբեր Հասարակական Գիտություններ*, no.1 (2015): 318-338. ISSN 0320-8117

witnessed. There are two different versions of the end of Gomidas' life and reasons leading to his death. The one most supported by facts and held by most Armenian scholars and musicologists to be true credits the instability of his last few years to a mental breakdown brought on by all he witnessed during the genocide. Gomidas spent his final days in and out of hospitals and visiting doctors to no avail. When his doctors realized that his condition would not improve, they sent him to the Hospital Vile Evrare in Paris. While his mental state continued to deteriorate, his death is attributed to osteit, a superlative inflammation of a foot bone, caused by an infection due to the unsanitary conditions he was kept in.

Gomidas is considered by Armenian musical contemporaries to have set the foundation for Armenian music. His position in the church allowed him to express and preserve the sacred music of his nation, and his research into traditional folk music preserved the authenticity of Armenian pastoral life. His research into traditional folk and sacred music has provided musicians today with a foundation in Armenian harmonic and melodic structure. His own compositions are rooted heavily in the folk ideas of the Armenian public. They also have a profound influence in the music of contemporary Armenian composers, giving the sounds of Armenia a distinct national style³⁴.

Gomidas viewed music as a tool of representation of nature and Armenian folk instruments. His composition "Alagiaz" (a mountain in Armenia with four summits), for instance, does not openly employ such formal divisions of distinct and neatly arranged phrases. Instead, his setting of the melody allows the ends of phrases to elide into one another, never fully coming to a halt, just like the four summits of the mountain merge into each other. Additionally, he uses several ornamental gestures

³⁴ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

which represent the sound and technique of folk instruments this piece was performed on or imitate the flexible voice of the Armenian peasant³⁵.

The most important service Gomidas rendered was to raise musical awareness among the peoples of the Near East. His collection and harmonization of folk songs, in addition to his compositions and performances reawakened a musical interest among the people, who realized that music is not just entertainment, it is an art³⁶.

Gomidas was very keen on emphasizing the uniqueness of Armenian music. He asserted that unlike Western music, which has the eight-note scale as its base, Armenian music is based on tetrachords, where if the distance between the first two notes were half a tone, then the other distances should be one tone. Whenever he heard songs with Armenian words but Western scales, he said that they were not authentic Armenian songs³⁷. Gomidas discovered that Armenian folk music has many different types. First, there were the children's songs, which were simple in text, tune, and form. Children's dances were simple enough to adapt movement, but more developed than children's songs. Heroic and epic ballads were based on traditional stories and legends with complicated melodic lines. Funeral songs, lamenting the loss of loved ones, were somber and gloomy, frequently starting with the lamenting interjections "aman" or "vay" (alas or woe), while wedding songs were happy and upbeat. Finally, songs about nature represented either the landscape of Armenia with its brooks, valleys, and mountains, or talked about the agricultural farmer, shepherd, and peasant life³⁸.

³⁵ VANN, K., "Armenian Folk Music and the East-West Dichotomy (on Example of Komitas Vardapet and Grigor Suni)". *Լրաբեր Հասարակական*

Գիտություններ, no.1 (2015): 318-338. ISSN 0320-8117

³⁶ NERCESSIAN, V., introduction to *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*, ed. Vrej N. Nercessian (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p.14.

³⁷ MANOUGIAN, T. Կոմիտասի Հանճարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*). (New York: For Our Times Publication, 1985), p. 6.

³⁸ NERCESSIAN, V., ed. *Essays on Armenian Music*. (London: Kahn and Averill Press, 1978), pp. 22-23.

Although Gomidas arranged Armenian folk songs which originated in the city, that was not his passion. His true passion was collecting folk songs of the peasants who lived in the village, the indigenous people. His goal was to identify and define the traditional music of Armenia, which he believed was found among the peasants, not the urban people, the latter being subject to Islamic influences from the occupying Ottoman Empire, especially those who lived in Turkey. His own compositions reflected deep knowledge of Armenian folk music³⁹. Whenever Gomidas provided piano accompaniments to his own tunes, he made sure to keep the original and traditional Armenian folk music element⁴⁰.

Today the music of Gomidas is widely performed throughout Armenia and the diaspora as a core part of Armenian musical studies. Many musical institutions and streets are named in his honor including the Yerevan Gomidas State Conservatory, the Gomidas Museum-Institute, Gomidas Chamber Music House, and Gomidas Avenue, in Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia⁴¹.

³⁹ MANOUGIAN, T. Կոմիտասի Հանճարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*). (New Work: For Our Times Publication, 1985), p. 18.

⁴⁰ MANOUGIAN, T. Կոմիտասի Հանճարը (*Gomidasi Hanjare*). (New Work: For Our Times Publication, 1985), p. 36.

⁴¹ CHRISTOFAKIS, A., "The Music at Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan" (2015). (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. Florida State University).

2 Original Folk Tunes and Arrangers

2.1 The original folk tunes

For the purposes of this thesis four Armenian folk songs were chosen to be comparatively analyzed: “Kani Vour Jan Im” by Sayat Nova, as well as “Gakavi Yerke”, “Karoun A”, and “Kele Kele” by Gomidas. Eleven different arrangements by nine Armenian composers were studied to enhance the comparative aspect of the analysis at the levels of difficulty (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and instrumentation (one piano, two pianos). In what follows, a brief description of each folk tune as well as a short biography of each of the nine arrangers will be presented.

2.1.1 Kani Vour Jan Im

“Kani Vour Jan Im” (so long as I live) is one of the almost 230 tunes which have been retrieved from the works of Sayat Nova (figure 1). The exact date of composition of this particular tune is not known; however, music historians assume it to have been composed between the years 1735 and 1745, the time when Sayat Nova perfected his skills as an ashough⁴².

The words of the song are written by Sayat Nova himself, and we can there see two signatures of the ashough, which confirm that this old folk tune is indeed his composition. First, the language of the song is very ancient Armenian, with direct words or influences from Turkish and Persian, which was the language that Sayat Nova used, having composed many years only in Turkish before moving to Armenian⁴³. But, more importantly, Sayat Nova’s signature can be found in the last

⁴² *Մայրաքաղաք Նուբար* (Sayat Nova) (accessed on January 25, 2016); available from <http://www.sayat-nova.am>

⁴³ INJEKIAN, H., “Sayat Nova and Armenian Ashoogh Musical Tradition” (1990). (Master’s Thesis. McGill University).

verse of the song, where he mentions his name in the poem itself: “that you only come to the garden and share of yourself with your Sayat Nova” (figure 2).

Figure 1



Figure 2

Թագ Ղու բաղչեն գաա անիս մասնեմաա քու Սայաթ-Նովուն:

This is a common technique in Persian literature, which had a great influence on Sayat Nova. The poet or writer mentioned his own name in the poem, referring to himself in the third person. The aim of this technique was to ensure that future generations know who was the author of the poem, as copyright and documenting methods didn’t exist back then⁴⁴.

The words of the text of this folk tune revolve around Sayat Nova’s lover. The text praises the physical attributes of the lover, while at the same time describing

⁴⁴ Սայաթ-Նովա (Յարութիւն Սայաթեան) 1712 – 1795 (Sayat Nova (Haroutyoun Sayatyan) 1712 – 1795 (accessed January 12, 2016); available from <http://www.armenische-kirche.ch>

Sayat Nova's intense love and suffering. Sayat Nova wishes that the lover would enter into the garden as he sings her praise on the saz⁴⁵.

2.1.2 Gakavi Yerke

An original composition by Gomidas is "Gakavi Yerke", the Song of the Partridge, the lyrics of which are written by Hovhannes Toumanian, the notable Armenian poet, whose creative work is also closely connected to folklore. "Gakavi Yerke" (also known as "Gakavig") was written for one-part chorus, piano, and solo singer. It is the result of the collaboration between Gomidas and Hovhannes Toumanian. The melody is based on an imitation of the mountain-dwelling partridge with the alternation of eighth note descending dyads and quarter notes (figure 3).

Figure 3



Composed in 1907, just 8 years before the tragic turn Gomidas' life took in 1915, this song talks about the bird, describing a joyful bird flying on the mountains

⁴⁵ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

on a sunny day, bringing greetings from the flowers. The genius of Gomidas as a composer is evident in the melody perfectly suited for the cheerful words that Toumanian has written for this piece⁴⁶.

2.1.3 Karoun A

“Karoun A” (it is spring) is believed to be composed between the years of 1899 and 1910, the most prolific period of Gomidas’ life as a composer. Although the title gives the impression that the text is a happy one, in fact, the song talks about a girl who has deserted her lover based on gossip from other people. The lyrics start with “it is spring”, but they are followed with “snow has fallen”. The melancholic topic of this text is accompanied by a composition in a minor key, at a relatively slow tempo⁴⁷ (figure 4).

Figure 4



⁴⁶ *Կոմիտաս (Gomidas)* (accessed on November 2, 2015); available from <http://www.komitas.am>

⁴⁷ *Զարոն Ա (Karoun A)* (accessed on December 27, 2015); available from <http://www.ktak.am>

2.1.4 Kele Kele

“Kele Kele” (stride up and down) is also a song that talks about a bird, the “Lorig” (quail). However, unlike the song of the partridge, it is believed that there is a hidden meaning beneath the text, addressing the lover as a quail. The text mentions that one would die for the stride of this quail, which is “injured” and “black with mourning”. While some believe it is yet another song of a lost love, others believe it is an allusion to the pains of the Armenian people living (or having lived) in diaspora, such as Gomidas himself. “Kele Kele” is most probably composed between the years of 1899 and 1910, when Gomidas had just returned to Armenia after many years in Berlin⁴⁸. Although the tune starts in major, the second theme, where the text talks about the quail being injured and mourning, goes to the minor key, and the song finishes in the minor key as well (figure 5).

Figure 5



⁴⁸ Կոմիտաս (Gomidas) (accessed on November 2, 2015); available from <http://www.komitas.am>

2.2 Biographies of arrangers

2.2.1 Robert Antreassyan

In addition to being an excellent pianist and accomplished composer, Robert Antreassyan (1913-1971) was a skillful editor and an exceptional music transcriber and arranger. Having studied at the Leningrad State Conservatory, Antreassyan was praised at a young age by Shostakovich for the high quality of his performances. He has composed numerous valuable arrangements of timeless Armenian folk tunes, such as “Gakavi Yerke” and “Karoun A”, which are among the most well-known folk songs among Armenians all over the world. Khachaturian stated that Antreassyan’s arrangements were done by the “hand of an expert.” Antreassyan was especially skilled at arranging folk tunes by Gomidas, retaining the structure of the original folk songs, while including elements of the European and Russian pianistic traditions. One of Antreassyan’s great accomplishments, however, was his arrangement for piano of Sayat Nova's songs. In his arrangements, he has maintained his own style and personality as a composer, while keeping the features of the original tunes⁴⁹.

2.2.2 Kayane Chepodarian

Kayane Chepodarian (1918-1998) was an Armenian composer and musicologist. She was born in Russia and graduated from the Leningrad Conservatory studying both piano performance and composition. In 1947 she took a teaching position with the Yerevan Gomidas State Conservatory where she was appointed full professor in 1977 teaching composition and mainly polyphony⁵⁰. Chepodarian has published a book on Armenian polyphonic music and has composed many preludes and fugues using Armenian folk tunes. Besides her original compositions,

⁴⁹ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

⁵⁰ *Մշակույթ (Mshagouyt)* (accessed on January 15, 2016); available from <http://www.armenianculture.am>

Chepodarian has largely arranged Armenian folk tunes for the piano. Her compositions are known for their simplicity, clarity, and melodic expressivity. Chepodarian was a member of the Composers' Union of Armenia^{51,52}.

2.2.3 Kevorki Sarachian

Kevorki Sarachian (1919-1986) was a soviet Armenian pianist and pedagogue. Sarachian studied music at the Leningrad conservatory at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, taught at the Yerevan conservatory, chairing its piano performance department in 1964, and acted as the dean of the faculty between the years 1974 and 1977. Aside from being a performer and the author of a piano methodology book, Sarachian has composed many pieces for the piano and has arranged numerous folk tunes for the piano as well⁵³.

2.2.4 Arno Babajanian

Arno Babajanian (1921-1983) was one of the most illustrious and exceptional Armenian composers of the Soviet era. A brilliant pianist, Babajanian was fortunate enough to meet Khachaturian, who believed in his abilities as a musician and encouraged him to go forward. Babajanian studied at the Moscow Conservatory, graduated in 1948, and became a highly regarded musical figure in the former Soviet Union, where he was a close colleague of Shostakovich. Armenian folk music and folklore are the bases upon which all of Babajanian's compositions rest. At the same time, his music is highly influenced by Khachaturian and Rachmaninoff, although it is

⁵¹ *Գայանե Չեփոսարյան (Kayane Chepodarian)* (accessed on January 15, 2016); available from <http://www.musicofarmenia.com>

⁵² *Գայանե Չեփոսարյան (Kayane Chepodarian)* (accessed on January 15, 2016); available from <http://www.lastfm.com>

⁵³ *Գեորգի Սարաչեւ (Keorki Sarachev)* (accessed January 20, 2016); available from <https://hy.wikipedia.org>

also unique and individual. His piano works are in a virtuoso style, liberal in their use of touch, texture, rhythm, and register.

Babajanian's arrangement of Sayat Nova's "Kani Vour Jan Im" is titled "Elegy" by the composer himself. Babajanian composed "Elegy" in memory of Khachaturian, who had been his mentor. In 1938, Khachaturian had come to Armenia to listen to folk musicians and to absorb the essence of his native music. Among the invitees was Levon Madoyan, a famous duduk player, who performed Sayat Nova's "Kani Vour Jan Im" on the duduk (Armenian woodwind instrument). Khachaturian was overwhelmed by the beauty of this tune, calling it a superhuman creation. Babajanian was also there as a budding composer, and he was greatly influenced by Khachaturian's comment about the ancient folk tune. When Khachaturian's death was announced on the Moscow radio, Babajanian remembered the incident and arranged that particular melody for piano, creating a work of nostalgic beauty and haunting elegance⁵⁴.

2.2.5 Sdepan Naghtyan

The name Sdepan Naghtyan (1921-1988) is a well-known name among violinists, pianists, and music educators thanks to his numerous compositions for these instruments and his methodology for piano pedagogy. Naghtyan has been both a composer and pedagogue from a very young age, forming and directing his own musical ensembles and chamber music groups, including a children's string ensemble at the very young age of 14. Later in his life he has worked as the artistic director of musicians at the Bioner palace.

Naghtyan has studied music at the Yerevan music school and has completed his studies in composition at the Yerevan Conservatory, studying with Edward Mirzoyan, among others. Having graduated in 1949, Naghtyan worked in Alaverti as

⁵⁴ BERBERIAN, M., "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times" (2010). (Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Florida International University).

a music teacher for children until 1952 when he was sent to Moscow to complete his higher education in music.

Naghtyan's passion was to compose music for children, and that's why even in his compositions for adults one can find the children's spirit, mood, and simplicity. He has composed in large amounts, mainly for children, but also for the piano and violin, his most famous work being his piano trio. While composing extensively, Naghtyan has never ceased to work as a pedagogue, training teachers to teach music to children. His compositions are known for their melodic simplicity, expressive honesty, and strong ties to Armenian folk music⁵⁵.

2.2.6 Garbis Aprikian

Garbis Aprikian (born 1926) is a musician from the Armenian Diaspora. He is the composer of many vocal and instrumental works in which Western musical contrapuntal technique merges with Armenian folk tunes. As a performer, Aprikian has been a choir conductor for about fifty years, directing the Armenian mixed chorus of Paris "Sipan-Gomidas", in addition to founding the "Hamazkayin" mixed chorus in 1948. His contribution in the European knowledge of the works of Gomidas, Ganachian, and other Armenian composers is crucial.

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, Aprikian took part in the cultural and artistic life of this cosmopolitan city when he was very young. While studying at an Armenian primary school in Egypt, Aprikian began learning music at the age of ten studying piano, then harmony, counterpoint, and fugue.

In 1948, Aprikian founded the mixed chorus "Hamazkayin" with which he gave, in Alexandria and in Cairo, a series of concerts, which merited him a scholarship to continue higher musical training in Europe. Aprikian arrived in Paris

⁵⁵ DER-SIMONIAN, M., introduction to Դպրոցական Երգեր Դաշնամուրի Նվագակցութեամբ (Tbrotsagan Yerker Tashnamouri Nvakagtsoutyamp), ed. Stepan Naghtyan (Yerevan: Hayasdan Publication, 1973), p.2.

where he studied composition and conducting of orchestra at the Ecole Normale of Music with Simone Plé-Caussade, Tony Aubin, and Jean Fournet and took a course of musical aesthetics by none other than Olivier Messiaen at the “Conservatoire National”.

Aprikian is the recipient of numerous awards by Armenian Catholicos His Holiness Vasken I and His Holiness Karekin II, in addition to the medal of the City of Marseille⁵⁶.

2.2.7 Robert Bedrossian

Robert Bedrossian (1930-2008) displayed musical talent as a very young child; however, he started formal music classes at the Sbentiarian music school at the age of 14, at the same time playing the trumpet in the brass ensemble of the Bioner Palace. After graduating from the Melikyan conservatory in 1957 as a composition student, he was accepted to the Gomidas Conservatory from which he graduated as a composition major with high honors.

In 1960 Bedrossian became the conductor and artistic director of the Sountougian orchestra where he once had played the trumpet, and he also started directing Armenian jazz ensembles receiving many prizes and medals for his work and music.

One of his greatest achievements was creating, founding, and directing the children’s vocal ensemble and television program “Arevig” in 1979. He continued with “Arevig” until 1986, when he became the artistic director of an ensemble of Armenian folk instruments.

A member of the Composers’ Union of Armenia, Bedrossian has received the gold medal of honor of the Ministry of Defense of Armenia for having founded their musical ensemble, “Elegia”. As a composer, he has over 300 works, 77 of which have received awards or medals. His compositions include symphonic, vocal, and chamber

⁵⁶ *Garbis Aprikian* (accessed January 22, 2016); available from <http://www.acam-france.org>

works, as well as works for the piano. Bedrossian has arranged numerous Armenian folk tunes for the piano⁵⁷.

2.2.8 Arek Lousinian

Arek Lousinian (born 1935) is a living Armenian composer who is highly esteemed among musical and artistic circles in Armenia. Having studied at the Romanos Melikyan conservatory between 1952 and 1956 with Armenian composer Edward Mirzoyan, Lousinian was accepted at the Gomidas conservatory in 1956 and graduated in 1961 as a composition student. Since then he has taught at the Romanos Melikyan conservatory, in addition to the liberal college of Yerevan and the musical department at the Apovyan University. He has also held the title of director of the union of Armenian composers, and he is the recipient of the Golden Medal of the President of the Republic of Armenia in the year 2010.

Lousinian has composed original works, arranged folk tunes of Gomidas and other Armenian composers, and written music pedagogy and methodology books and manuals for teachers of music from the levels of kindergarten all the way to those of university^{58,59}.

2.2.9 Zareh Sghomonian

Born and raised in the city of Yerevan, Sghomonian (born 1938) studied piano, accordion, and composition at the Yerevan Conservatory, where he also taught

⁵⁷ *Ռոբերտ Դեւրոսյան (Robert Bedrossian)* (accessed January 14, 2016); available from <http://avproductions.am>

⁵⁸ *Արեգ Լուսինյան (Arek Lousinian)* (accessed January 8, 2016); available from <https://www.hy.wikipedia.org>

⁵⁹ *Հայկական երաժշտությունը խորհրդային տարիներին (Haygagan Yerajshdoutyoune Khorhrtayin Darinerin)* (accessed January 14, 2016); available from <https://hy.wikipedia.org>

upon graduation until the year 1996. Although his compositional output isn't vast, he has numerous arrangements of Armenian folk tunes for the piano and the accordion. Sghomonian believed to train the children and teach them the love of folk music from a young age, and hence he spent most of his teaching career working with children. Sghomonian is a member of the Composers' Union of Armenia⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Հայկական Էրաժշտությունը խորհրդային տարիներին (*Haygagan Yerajshdoutyoune Khorhrtayin Darinerin*) (accessed January 14, 2016); available from <https://hy.wikipedia.org>

3 Comparative Analyses

In this section the analyses of the 11 pieces are presented. As stated in the introduction, this thesis employed both within and between analysis designs as its method of analysis. First each piece was analyzed in itself, studying its different musical elements, and then common elements were compared between different arrangements, as well different arrangements of the same folk tune. For the purposes of this thesis, elements and techniques of piano arrangement were extracted from the within and between analysis, which are presented here below.

3.1 Orchestral simulations

Because of the vast range of the piano and the ability to play chords, scales, and notes on it, it is very feasible to compose for the piano while having an orchestra in mind. The literature is full of piano reduction of orchestral pieces, and many pieces composed for the piano give the impression of different orchestral instruments playing the different parts, if one were to use his or her imagination.

So it is with the arrangements of Armenian folk tunes. One element of arrangement for folk tunes, which simulates orchestration, is to envelop the melody within the harmony. In other words, as the melody is played in the lower part of the right hand (or shared with the left hand), the upper part of the right hand plays something else, an accompaniment, thus enveloping the melody along with the bass line of the left hand. Two such examples can be found in the arrangements of the folk tune “Kani Vour Jan Im” by Sayat Nova, by Babajanian and Sarachian respectively.

Consider the introduction by Babajanian (figure 1). The lower fingers of the right hand play the main melody of the original folk song (refer to Chapter 3, figure 1), while the left hand and the upper fingers of the right hand provide the harmony. A similar example can be found in the reprise of second theme (figure 2), where the melody is enveloped in an octave played by the thumb and little finger of the right hand, while the other fingers play the melody.

Figure 1

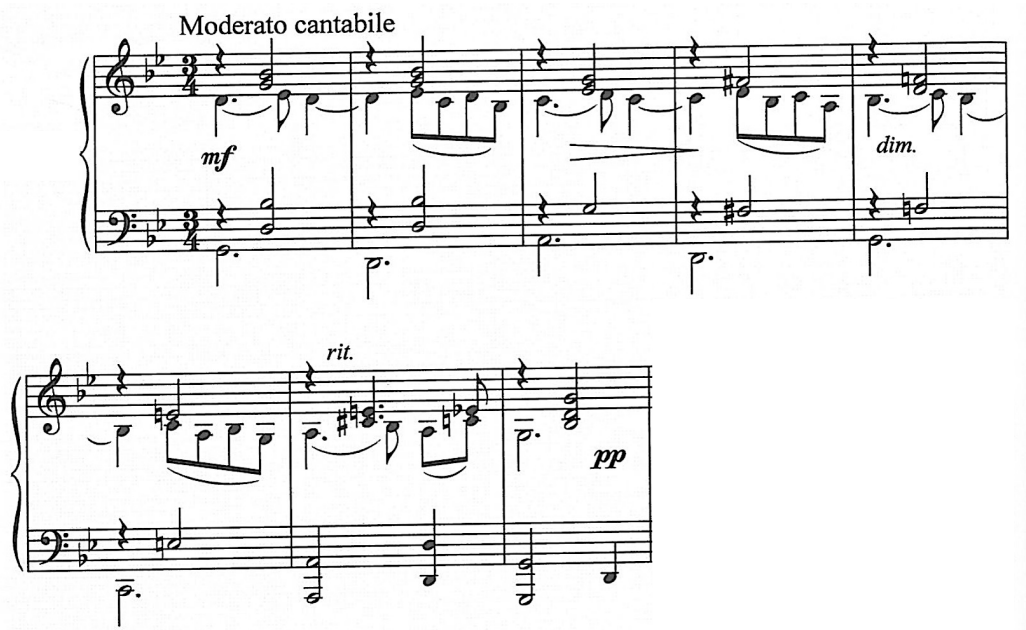
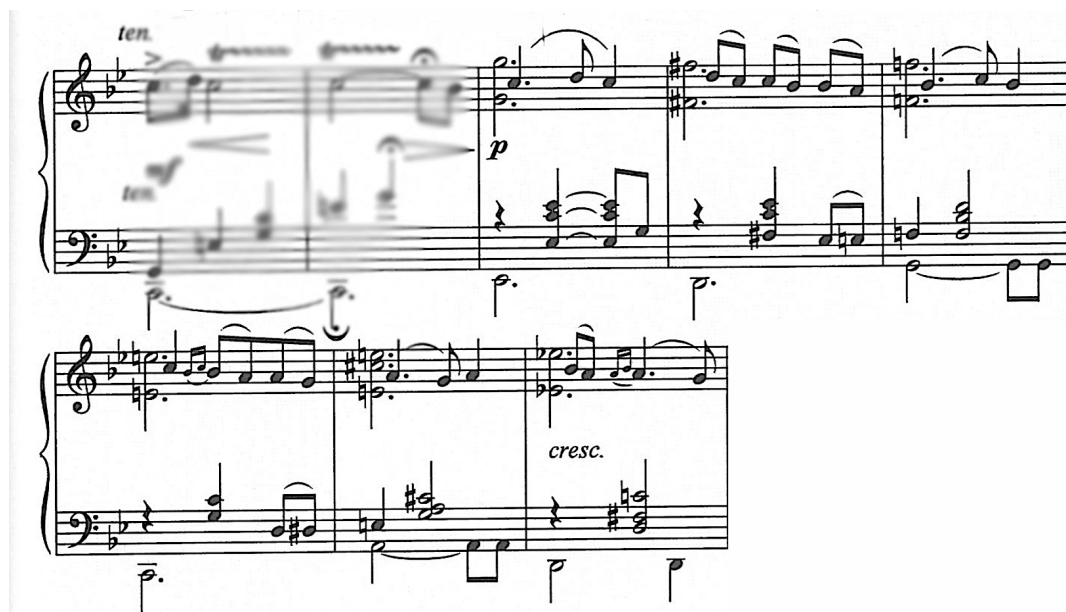


Figure 2



Here Babajanian uses the same technique he used in the introduction, which is to envelop the accompaniment around the melody. A closer look at the “accompaniment” in the right hand shows that Babajanian is using another important aspect of arranging this folk tune for the piano simulating an orchestra, and that is chromatic lines. First, there is a chromatic line in the right hand octaves which envelop the melody (G - F \sharp - F - E - E \flat). Second, it is very orchestral in style, as the

chromatic line could be viewed as being played by first and second violins in an octave, a technique widely used in orchestration. In other words, if one were to orchestrate this arrangement, one would find that Babajanian has already set the groundwork for instrumentation in his original composition. Furthermore, the transition between measures 2 and 3 and that between 4 and 5 (in figure 2, not counting the blurred measures), show a very pretty “viola line”, in an ascending chromatic motion. This serves a triple function. First, it serves as a tool for arrangement; second, it employs a chromatic line; and finally, it gives an orchestral simulation, whereas the main melody is played by, say, the clarinet, while the first violins play a line on top, second violins play an octave lower, and the viola adds transitory phrases between measures.

Sarachian’s arrangement of the same folk song uses the same concept of enveloping the melody within the harmony almost the entire time (figure 3). While the right hand plays the melody, the left hand is playing in the treble region, just around the melody. Quite challenging pianistically, this model gives the impression that two different instruments were to play these lines.

Figure 3

The image displays a musical score for a piano arrangement, consisting of two systems. The first system begins at measure 9 and the second at measure 14. The right hand (RH) plays a melodic line, while the left hand (LH) provides a supporting line in the treble region. The score includes various musical notations such as fingerings, dynamics (mf, p), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The first system is marked *mf* cantabile and the second system is marked *p*. The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 2/4 time signature.

Soghomonian envelops the melody in a left hand accompaniment and right hand orchestral descant line in his arrangement of “Gakavi Yerke” by Gomidas (figure 4). Once again, the two elements of piano arrangements discussed hitherto can be seen in this example. First, the melody is in the middle voice, enveloped between two figures of accompaniment (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 3). Second, the topmost voice in the right hand is a descending chromatic line (B \flat - A - A \flat - G - G \flat - F), which is comparable to Babajanian’s use of a descending chromatic line (see figure 2) to envelop the melody from above. Additionally, these descending chromatic lines serve as a simulation of orchestration where they are played by a treble instrument, say a violin or a flute.

Figure 4



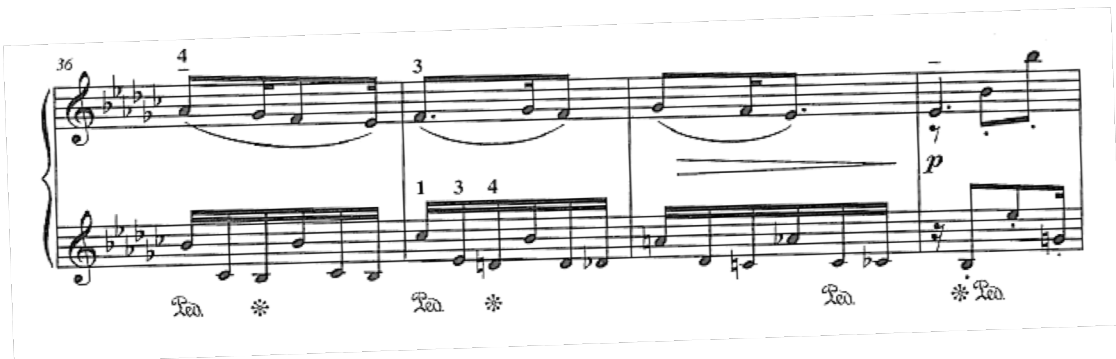
Continuing among the lines of using chromatic lines as orchestral simulations, we can see that Sarachian uses this technique in his arrangement of “Kani Vour Jan Im” as well, albeit less obviously, where the chromatic line is hidden within the moving 16th notes of the accompaniment (figure 5). The first measure of figure 5 (not counting the blurred measure) plays a B \flat and A (encircled), while the third and fourth measures play a D \flat , C, C \flat , and B \flat , thus creating a chromatic line. In the same arrangement, Sarachian uses another novel employment of chromatic lines, where

groups of two notes form a chromatically descending dyad every second and third 16th note of the accompaniment in the left hand (figure 6).

Figure 5



Figure 6



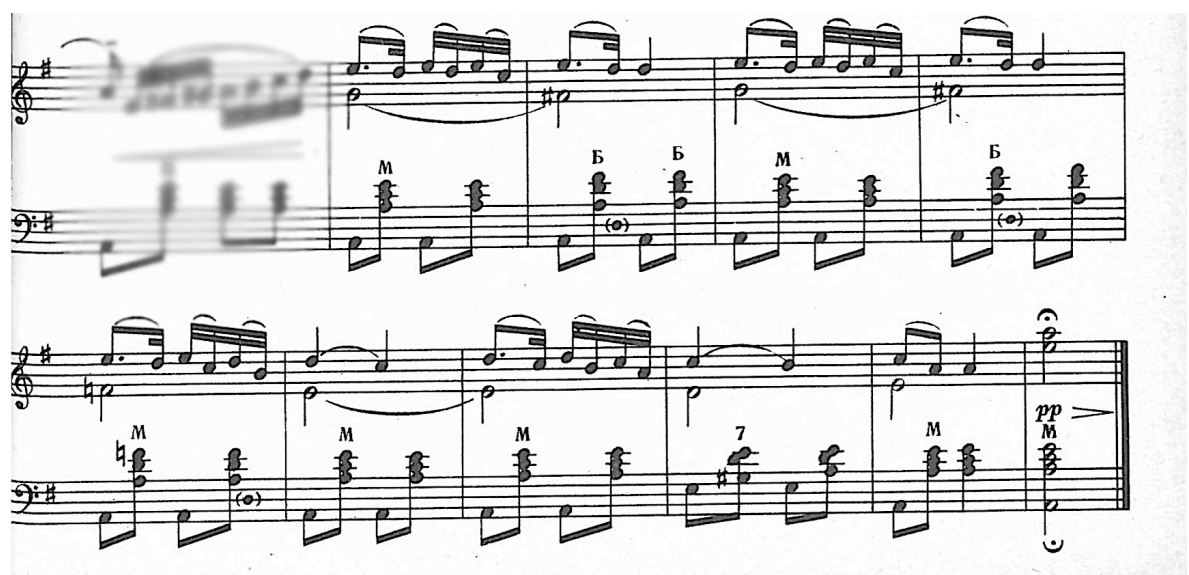
Lousinian also uses orchestral simulations in his arrangement of “Kele, Kele” by Gomidas, but this time instead of enveloping the melody within the accompaniment, like the examples from Babajanian, Sarachian, and Soghomonian, he provides a second voice, what I would like to call an alto line, to go with the melody (figure 7) which starts with a very long note (A) held almost for six bars, followed by an F# and an E (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 5). One would imagine the oboe, for instance, playing this alto line as the violins play the main melody. Soghomonian’s arrangement of the same folk song also uses an alto line, but here,

and in line with what was in Babajanian and Sarachian's arrangements of the Sayat Nova folk song, the alto line is a descending chromatic line as well (figure 8)

Figure 7



Figure 8



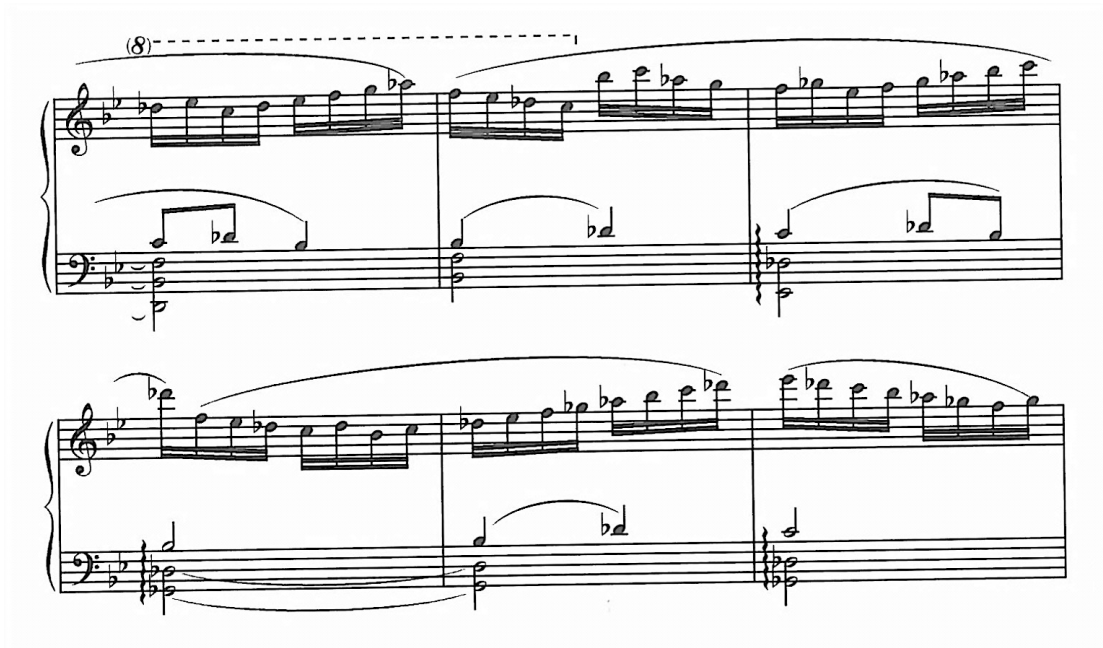
Chepodarian has arranged the folk song “Karoun A” by Gomidas in a theme and variations form, composing seven variations (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 4). A within analysis of the work reveals the use of elements of arrangement for piano, and a between analysis shows that this work contains the two elements that have been discussed so far: enveloping the melody within accompaniment and using chromatic lines.

Two examples of an enveloped melody can be found in variations four and six (figures 9 and 10). In figure 9, 16th notes embellish the main melody (encircled), mostly going above the notes of the main melody, while in figure 10 the melody is played by the topmost note of the left hand, the rest of which provides chords and bass while the right hand plays 16th notes on the top, and hence the melody is enveloped between both accompaniment figures of the left hand and the top part of the right hand.

Figure 9



Figure 10



As for chromatic lines, in the fifth variation Chepodarian uses a descending chromatic line as a bass line, in octaves. The similarity with what was hitherto discussed is the use of chromatic lines. The difference, however, is the appearance of this line in the left hand, as the bass in octaves. From an orchestral perspective, one could imagine the cello and double bass playing this line (figure 11). After the first whole step (G-F), the left hand plays a chromatic descent as the right hand plays the main melody of the folk tune in octaves. In the same variation Chepodarian uses descending (and ascending) chromatic chords as accompaniment, which is a novelty unseen in arrangements discussed previously (figure 12). Here, not only the octaves at the extremities of the chords move chromatically, but also, at times, the inner voices of the chords move chromatically while the extremities remain in place. As for an alto line, similar to Babajanian, Lousinian, Soghomonian, and other arrangers, Chepodarian writes an elaborate and syncopated alto line to accompany the main melody in the sixth variation (figure 13).

Figure 11

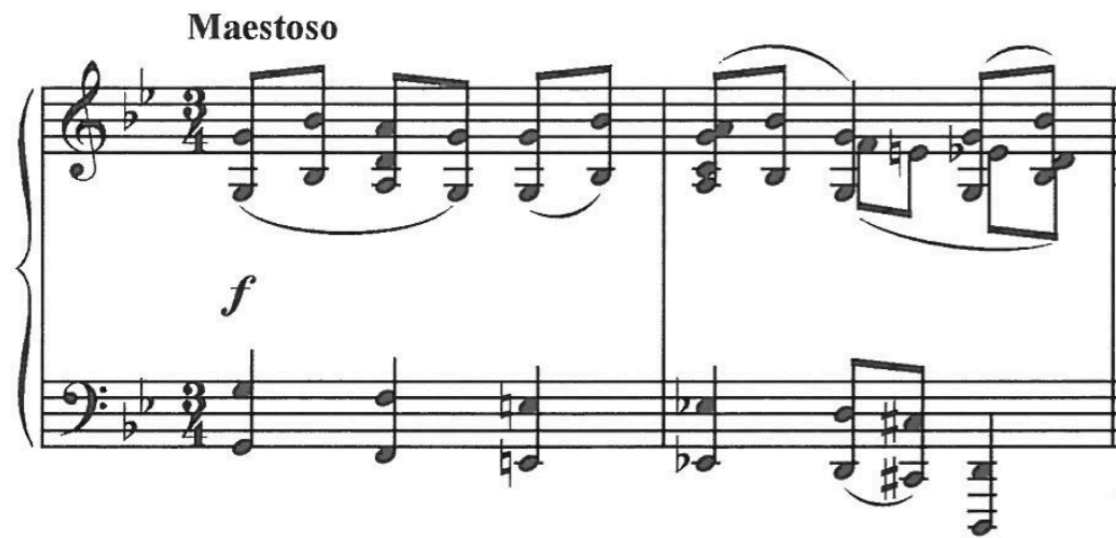
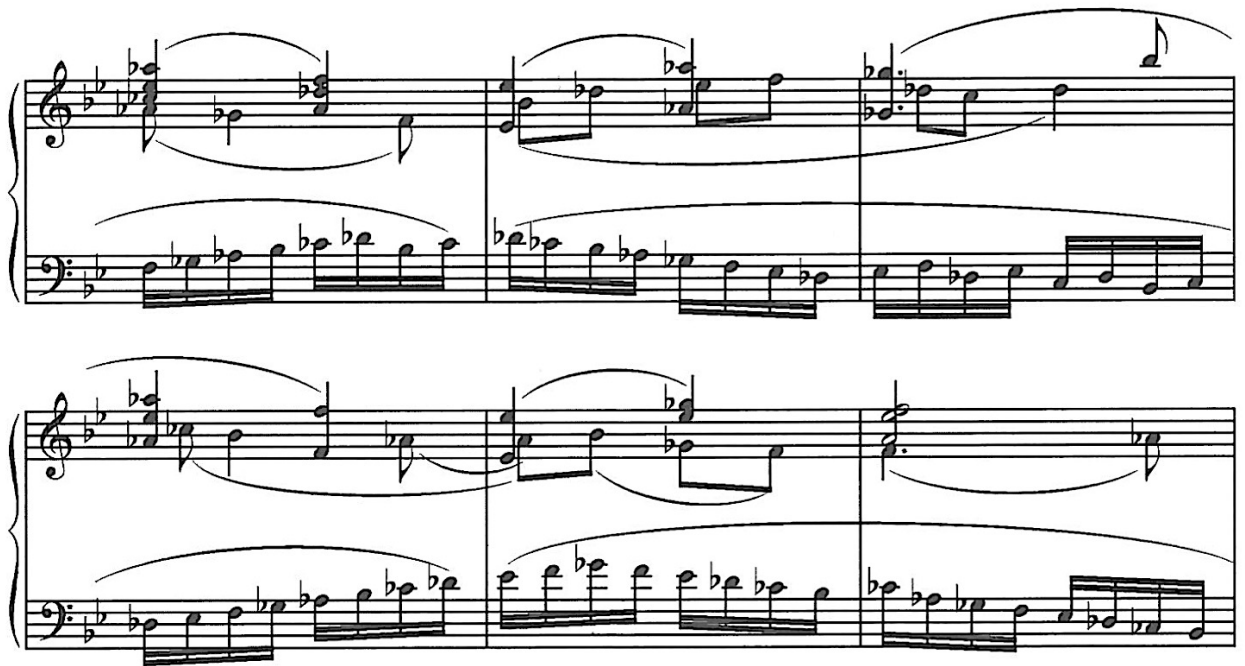


Figure 12



Figure 13



3.2 Melodic alterations

Another element used by composers to create piano arrangements of folk tunes is melodic alteration. Composers change the melody either as a tool of arrangement per se, or as an adaptation to accommodate harmonic progressions or other tools of arrangement. The five elements of melodic alteration which were revealed through the within and between analyses are the use of ornaments, the use of octaves, changing the notes of the melody, changing the rhythm of the melody, and moving the melody to the left hand.

3.2.1 Ornaments

The simplest way melodic alterations occur is through the use of ornaments. The literature is full of ornaments used by composers as they arrange folk songs for piano. For instance, Babajanian uses mordents in his arrangement of “Kani Vour Jan Im” in many different places, such as in the very first appearance of the main melody

of the first theme (figure 14), and Sarachian uses ornaments or spelled-out ornamental notes (or lines) in his arrangement of the same folk song (figure 15).

Figure 14

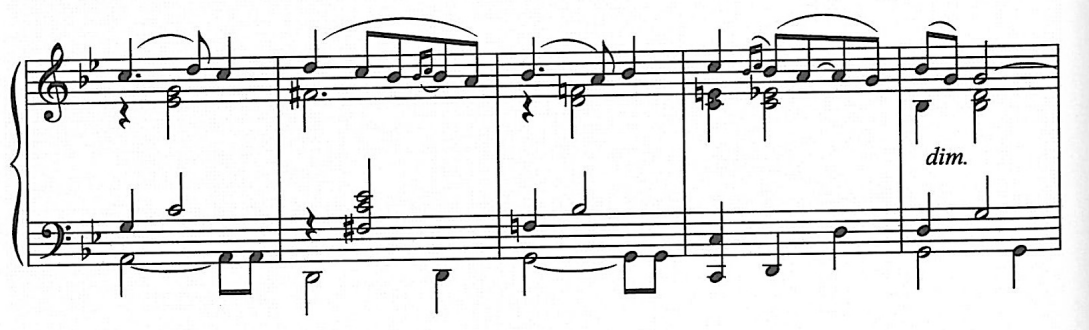
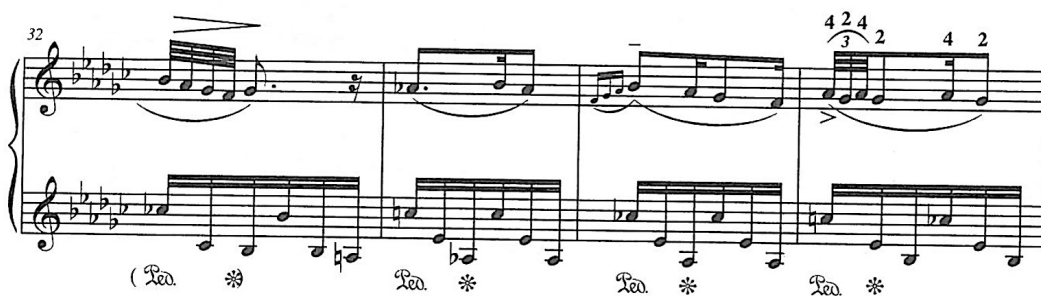


Figure 15



Lousinian uses tremolos in his arrangements of “Kele, Kele”, and he marks the notes of the original melody with “tenuto” (figure 16).

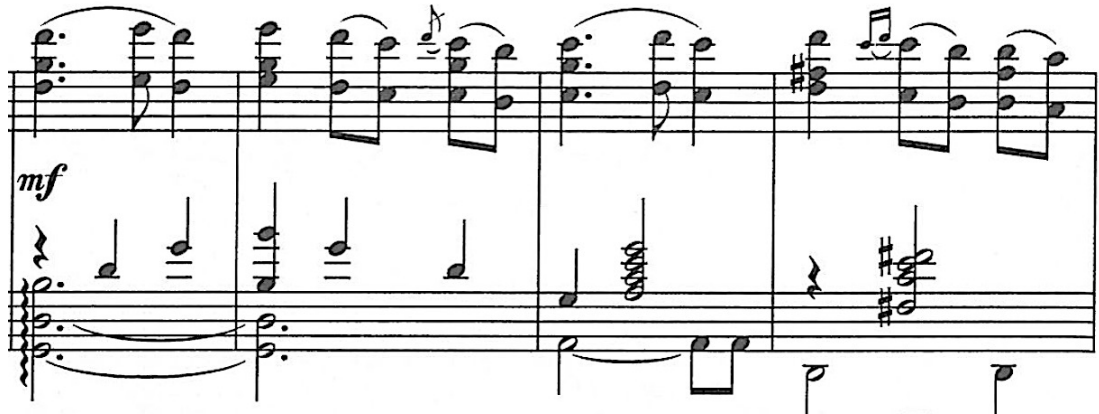
Figure 16



3.2.2 Octaves

Another form of melodic alteration is the usage of octaves. Octaves serve a double function. First, they alter the melody from its original form to that of octaves. Second, they give the impression that more than one instrument is playing the same melody, leading back to our discussion of an orchestral simulation in the previous passage. An added benefit of octaves is that they give more volume to the passage, and hence can be used in a section where the music builds up to higher dynamic levels. Such an example can be found in Babajanian's arrangement of "Kani Vour Jan Im" (figure 17).

Figure 17



Chepodarian also uses octaves in her theme of "Karoun A" by Gomidas, where she first presents the main melody in the right hand as a single line accompanied by chords with the dynamic level piano, and then she repeats the melody, this time in octaves giving more volume and dynamics to it, mezzo piano (figure 18). Chepodarian also starts the fifth variation directly with octaves playing the melody at the dynamic level forte (figure 19), in contrast to the first variation where the melody was played as a single line with the dynamic level of piano.

Figure 18



Figure 19



An interesting use of octaves can be found in the arrangement of Gomidas' "Kele, Kele" by Bedrossian for two pianos. Here, the second piano starts the piece with the accompaniment, and on the third measure the first piano comes in playing the melody at an octave, albeit with both hands playing single lines. The accompaniment is made up of rolled six-voice chords, and with such a thick accompaniment, playing the melody in octaves highlights the melody (figure 20).

Figure 20

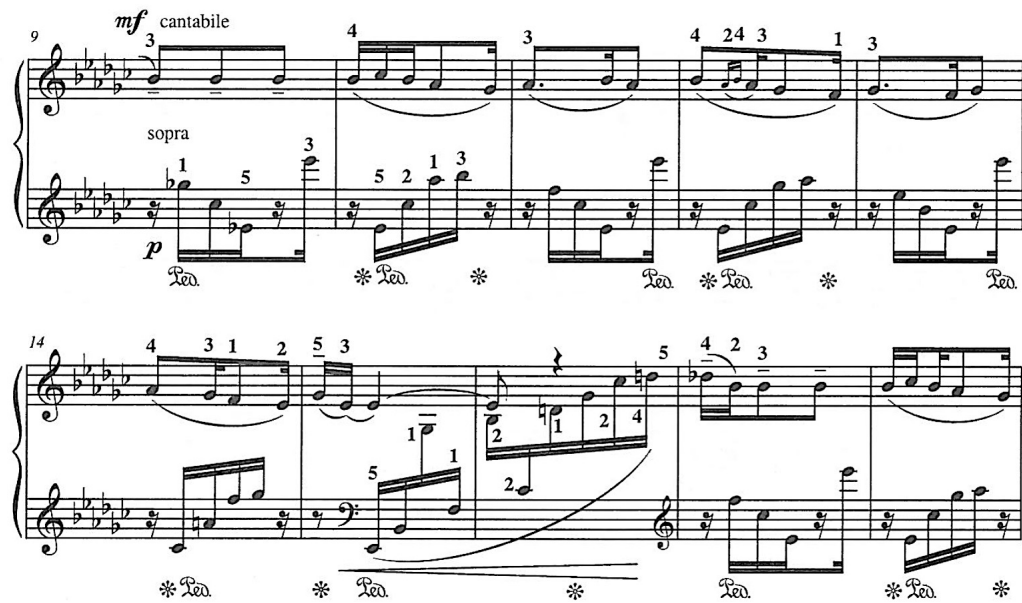
The image shows a musical score for two systems, I and II. System I is a vocal line in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major, marked 'Larghetto, dolce'. It begins with a whole rest for two measures, then enters with a melody starting on G4, marked 'p'. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. System II is a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major, marked 'Larghetto, dolce'. It begins with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, marked 'mp'. The right hand melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand bass line consists of eighth and quarter notes.

3.2.3 Changing the notes of the melody

Yet another method of melodic alteration is actually changing the notes of the main melody for harmonic or arrangement purposes. This is different from adding ornaments or supporting the melody by octaves in that the actual melody changes, sometimes to the extent of being unrecognizable if played out of context. Miniature examples can be seen in the arrangement of “Kani Vour Jan Im” by Sarachian, the second variation on the theme of “Karoun A” by Chepodarian, and “Gakavi Yerke” by Antreassyan. In each example the main melody is progressively altered more and more.

Sarachian changes the main melody of the tune from a dotted quarter B \flat followed by an eighth C \flat to three quarter B \flat notes (figure 21). The main melody in the original folk tune is repeated twice (with different words), and as a tool of arrangement, Sarachian slightly modifies the melody the first time at its very beginning and keeps the rest as is in the original folk tune (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 1).

Figure 21



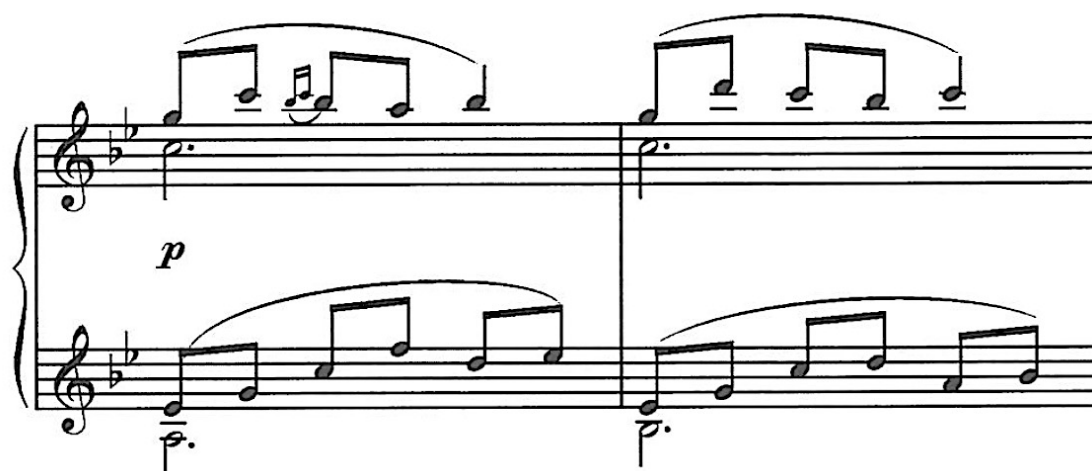
Chepodarian alters the melody twice in the second variation of her arrangement of Gomidas' "Karoun A". First, she starts the variation already with a modified melody, which is a technique used for composing variations on a theme. Instead of the original B \flat at the end of the first measure, Chepodarian writes an A, and thus continues with a different melody in measure 2 (figure 22) (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 4).

Figure 22



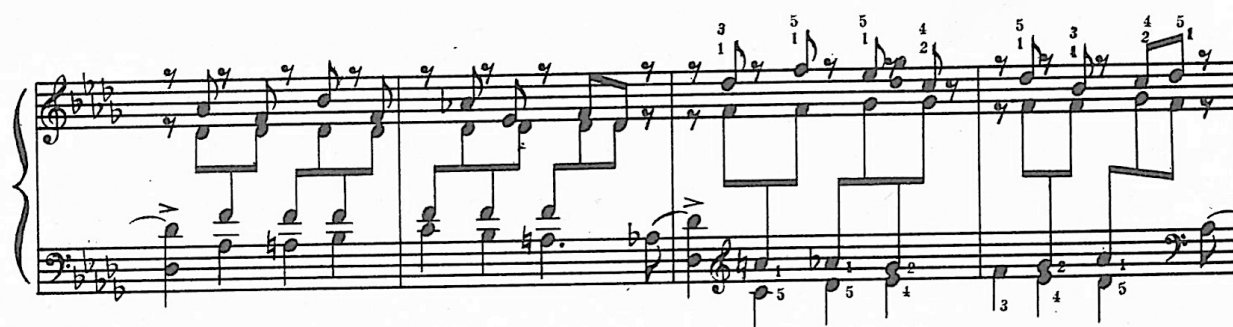
In the second part of the main melody, Chepodarian replaces the repetition of the first measure by a melodic sequence (figure 23). Two differences exist in the original melody. First, the notes of the first measure are G-C-B \flat -D-C-A in the original version, whereas in the arrangement they are G-C-B \flat -A-B \flat . Second, the measure is repeated fully in the original version, while here there is a melodic sequence to the melody, G-D-C-B \flat -C.

Figure 23



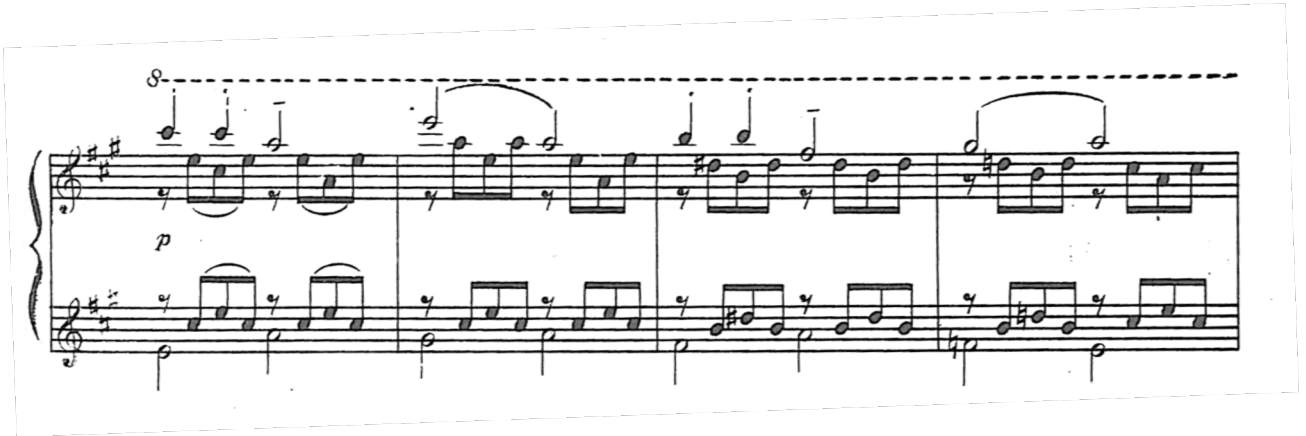
Finally, melodic alterations can be found in Antreassyan's arrangement of "Gakavi Yerke" by Gomidas. The third and fourth measures have a different melody than the original version (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 3), such that the first interval is an ascending third in the arrangement, while it is a descending third in the original melody (figure 24).

Figure 24



Antreassyan completely changes the main melody in the figure below, altering both notes and rhythm of the original melody (figure 25).

Figure 25



3.2.4 Changing the rhythm of the melody

In the last example of the previous section, Antreassyan alters not only the notes of the main melody but also its rhythm. This is another technique for arranging a folk tune for the piano. Composers use the technique of rhythmic alterations of the melody, such that the actual notes stay the same, but the rhythm is modified. Chepodarian uses many examples of rhythmic modification in her theme and variations on “Karoun A” by Gomidas. For instance, she plays the theme by augmentation in the right hand (figure 26), where the value of each note is increased by six times its original value (eighth note becomes dotted half note), then by augmentation and altered rhythm (figure 27), and then by using a dotted eighth note followed by a 16th note in 2/4 time signature instead of the original eighth notes in a 3/4 time signature (figure 28). Another rhythmic modification Chepodarian uses is changing the melody from eighth notes to quarter notes and from 3/4 to 2/4 time signature. Rhythmically it still sounds the same, but the accents are placed differently based on the downbeat of a 2/4 time signature, and it sounds slower because of the doubling of the value of the notes, even with the tempo indication *animato* (figure 29).

Figure 26



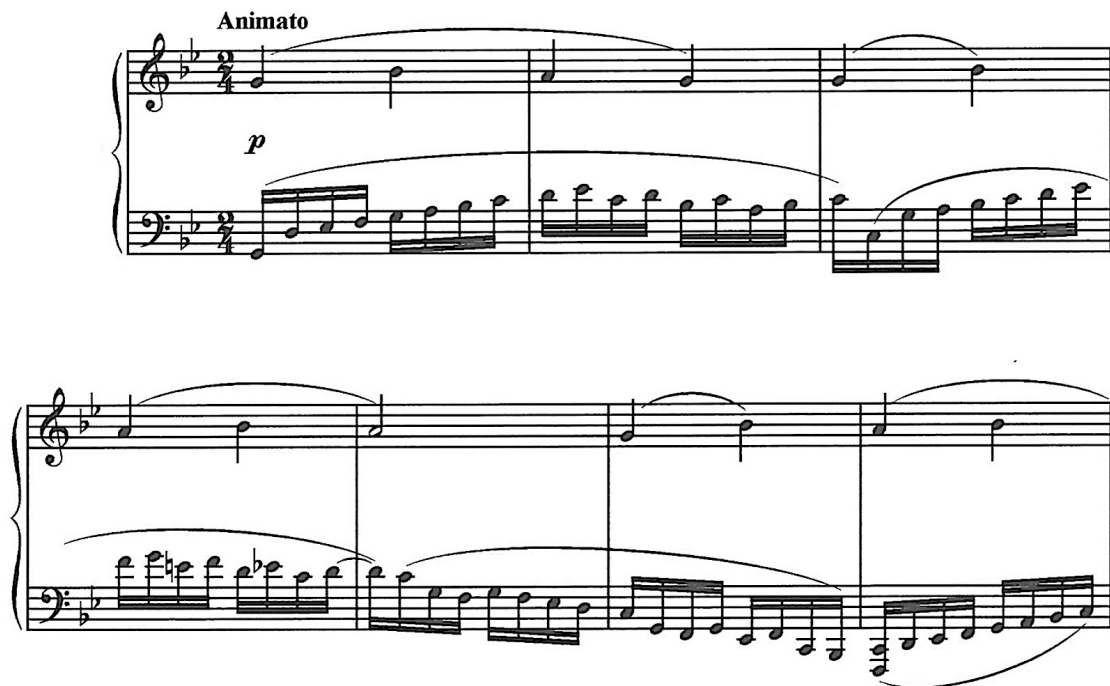
Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Antreassyan, though never altering the rhythmic values of the notes per se, repeats each two measures of the melody in his arrangement of “Gakavi Yerke”, a rare arrangement technique not found in any other of the pieces studied for this thesis (figure 30). In one version of Gomidas’ own arrangement of this song, the choir repeats every two measures after a solo singer, and Antreassyan is imitating that technique of Gomidas in his arrangement.

Figure 30



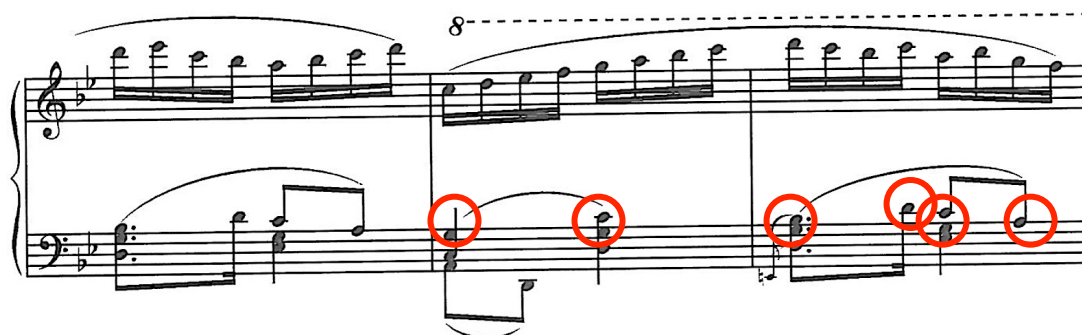
3.2.5 Moving the melody to the left hand

A final melodic alteration would be moving the melody to the left hand. This technique has two purposes. First, at the technical, pianistic level, it requires a different skill to play the melody with the left hand. On the musical level, playing the melody with the left hand on the lower register of the piano sounds different from playing it at the treble range. Consistent with the previous discussion on orchestral simulations, playing the melody with the left hand imitates instruments with lower ranges and tones. Antreassyan uses this technique in his arrangement of “Karoun A”, and he interestingly plays the melody in a canon between left and right hands (figure 31). Chepodarian also uses the left hand to play the melody (figure 32) in an intricate design of simultaneously playing chords with the left hand while the right hand plays scales of 16th notes (notes of the melody are encircled in the figure).

Figure 31



Figure 32



Embellishing the main melody with ornaments, playing it in octaves, changing the actual notes, altering the rhythm, or playing it at different registers of the piano are all techniques of modifying the melody, which is one of the elements of arranging folk tunes for the piano.

3.3 Representations

The piano is a very versatile instrument. As discussed earlier, it can be used to simulate a full orchestra and provide rich rhythmic accompaniment. The piano can also be used to represent certain matters, and in the selection of the piano arrangements of Armenian folk songs studied for the current work three such representations could be highlighted.

First, Lousinian, in his arrangement of “Kele, Kele” by Gomidas, uses both the piano and his arrangement techniques to simulate Armenian peasants and lay people singing and playing folk tunes in their natural environment. The first theme of the folk tune in this particular arrangement is an irregular seven-measure phrase, which should have been an eight-measure phrase according to the original tune (for original melody refer to Chapter 3, figure 5). Perhaps removing the empty, melody-less measure at the end is part of the arrangement, which is used to highlight the G in measure 4, which, though in the melody, doesn’t carry a new syllable but is an extension of the syllable found on the previous D (figure 33), whereas at the end of the phrase there is no new note for the same syllable.

Figure 33

The musical score for "Kele, Kele" is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 to 4, and the second system covers measures 5 to 7. The tempo is marked "Andante" and the dynamic is "mf". The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides harmonic support. The score is enclosed in a dashed-line box.

Non-musicians singing folk tunes would usually treat the G of measure 4 as an *ad libitum* note instead of a clear cut 2-beat measure, while treating the non-existent measure 8 as just a quick breather before moving to theme 2. Silences between themes or phrases are almost never held to their entire length anyway, and to give it a true countryside nature, Lousinian might have decided to highlight the difference between both endings.

The melody of the second theme is played by the right hand, although accompanied, still in the right hand, with a held A all the way to its sixth measure. The note A could signify a woodwind instrument such as the *zourna* (Armenian folk woodwind instrument) which typically a shepherd or villager would play, who, for the lack of musical knowledge, would play a single note, the tonic (or sometimes dominant and tonic alternatively) as other villagers sing the folk tune. The note A moves to an F \sharp and then to an E at the end in the arrangement for harmonic purposes (figure 34).

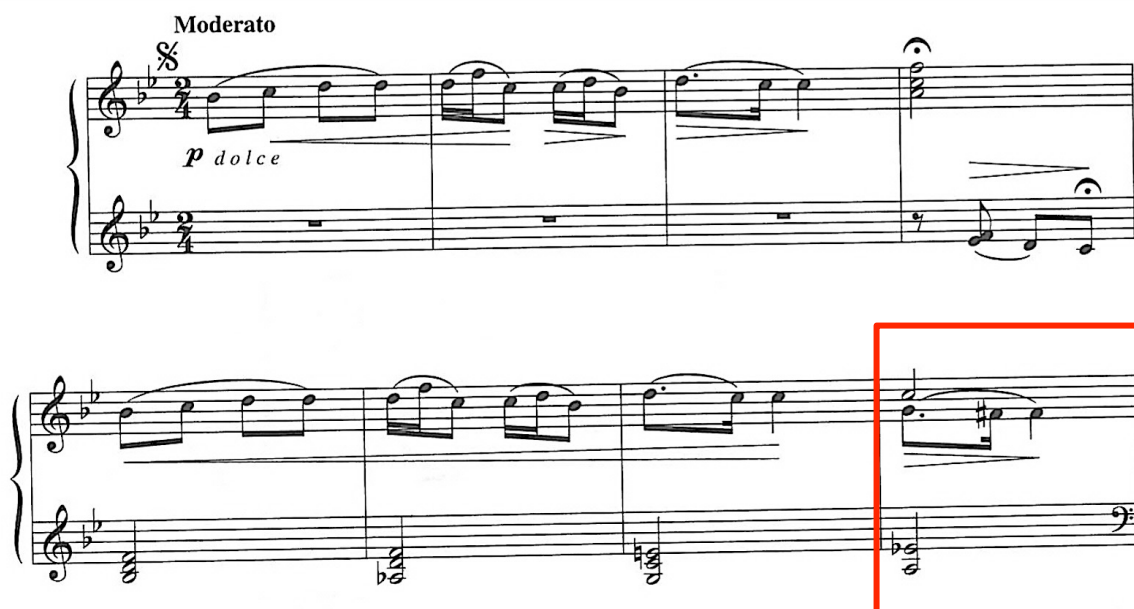
Figure 34



Contrary to the Lousinian version, the Naghtyan version of the same folk song has the eighth measure that was missing in the previously analyzed version. The eighth measure serves three very important functions: it makes the phrase a complete and regular one of eight measures instead of an irregular seven-measure phrase, it

provides the harmony of the diminished 7th that leads to the G minor in theme 2, and it adds an imitation of the melody of the seventh measure in the alto line (figure 35).

Figure 35

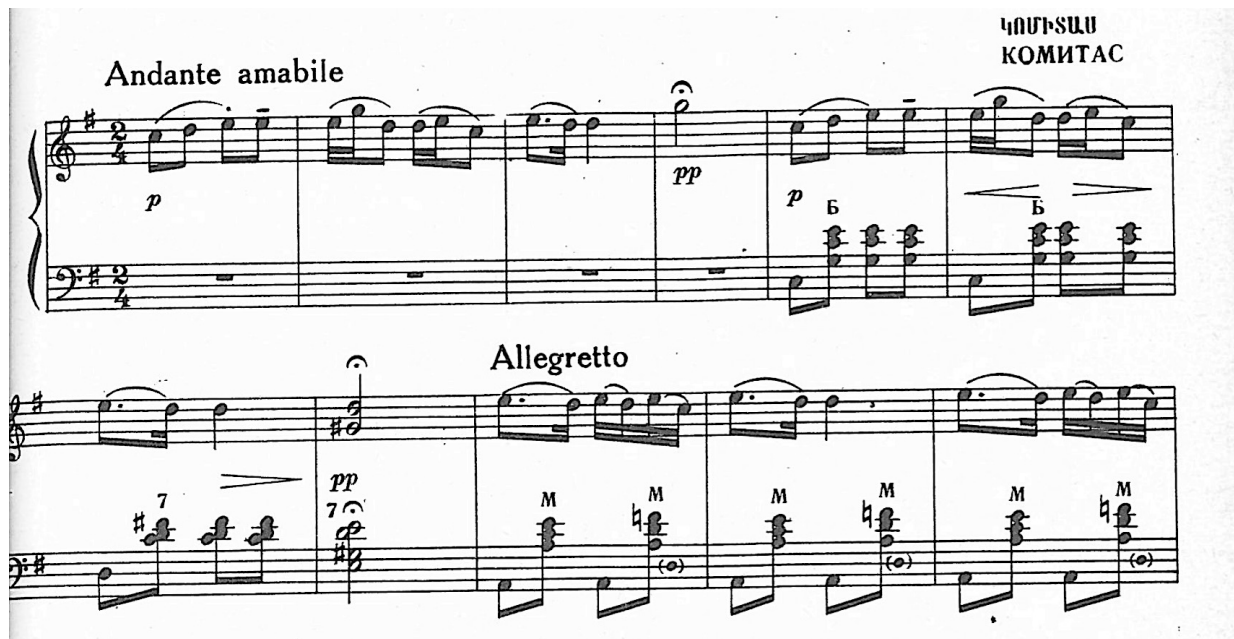


In figure 34, in Naghtyan’s arrangement of “Kele Kele”, the first three measures play the melody in monophony, unaccompanied, possibly to imitate a lone villager who would sing this alone. Measure 4 has a fermata, which is probably how villagers would sing this tune, staying on that higher note for an unidentified period of time. The left hand appears as a transition to measure 5, where the melody is repeated in the right hand alone, yet there are block chords in the left hand as accompaniment.

The Soghomonian version of the same folk tune also starts monophonically, similar to the two other versions discussed hitherto. At the end of the second phrase, Soghomonian adds an E7 chord, the dominant 7th of the upcoming A minor, similar to the diminished 7th chord in Naghtyan’s version (figure 36).

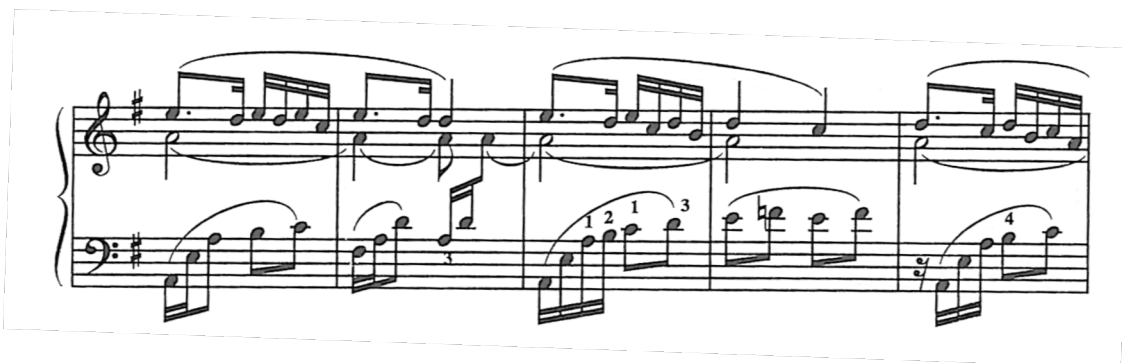
Three different composers have arranged this folk tune in the same manner of having the melody start monophonically, which represents a lone Armenian villager singing a capella.

Figure 36



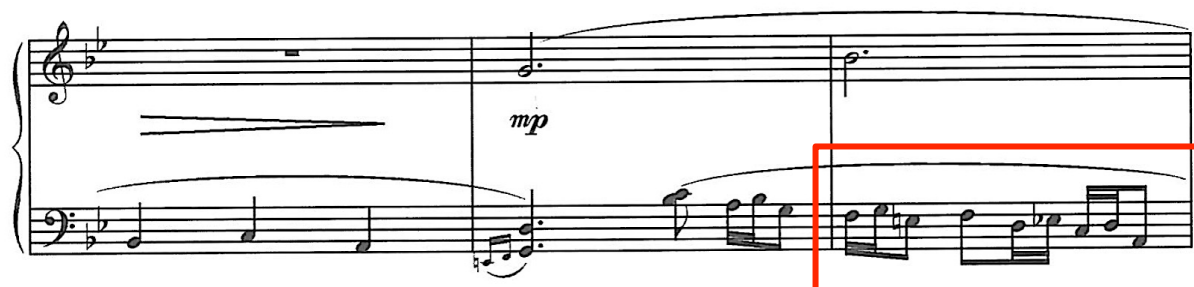
A second representation in arrangements of folk songs for the piano is that of Armenian folk percussion instruments. Since Lousinian strives to preserve the folk nature of the original tune of “Kele Kele” as he arranges it for the piano, as previously discussed, he creates a percussive representation by the left hand, which alternates between 8th and 16th notes, with some expressive rests on the downbeats. This makes the left hand very rhythmical, suggestive of a percussion instrument, possibly the dhol (Armenian hand drum). This is an additional indication that Lousinian has tried to preserve the folk nature of this tune instead of opting for an orchestral or pianistic character (figure 37).

Figure 37



Chepodarian imitates two very typical Armenian dance rhythms: two 16th notes followed by an 8th note, and an 8th note followed by two 16th notes (boxed in the following figure). These give the accompaniment a percussive character (figure 38).

Figure 38



A final representation is that of the partridge. “Gakavi Yerke”, the song of the partridge, is all about the bird, and even the original main melody of the folk song consists of two eighth notes followed by a quarter note, which is meant to simulate the sound of the partridge. In his arrangement of “Gakavi Yerke”, Aprikian uses an exchange of rhythm such that the left hand plays a quarter note followed by two eighth notes while the right hand plays the opposite rhythmic pattern, which creates an imitation of the partridge as well (figure 39).

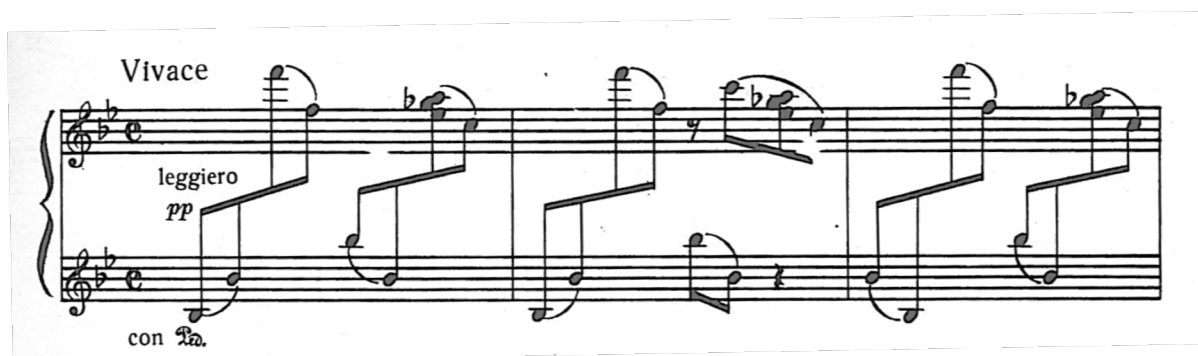
Figure 39



Antreassyan, on the other hand, in his version of the same folk song uses two ascending eighth notes in the right hand, followed by two descending eighth notes in

the left hand throughout the overture he composes for his arrangement, and this rhythm structure is his way of alluding to the sound of the partridge (figure 40).

Figure 40

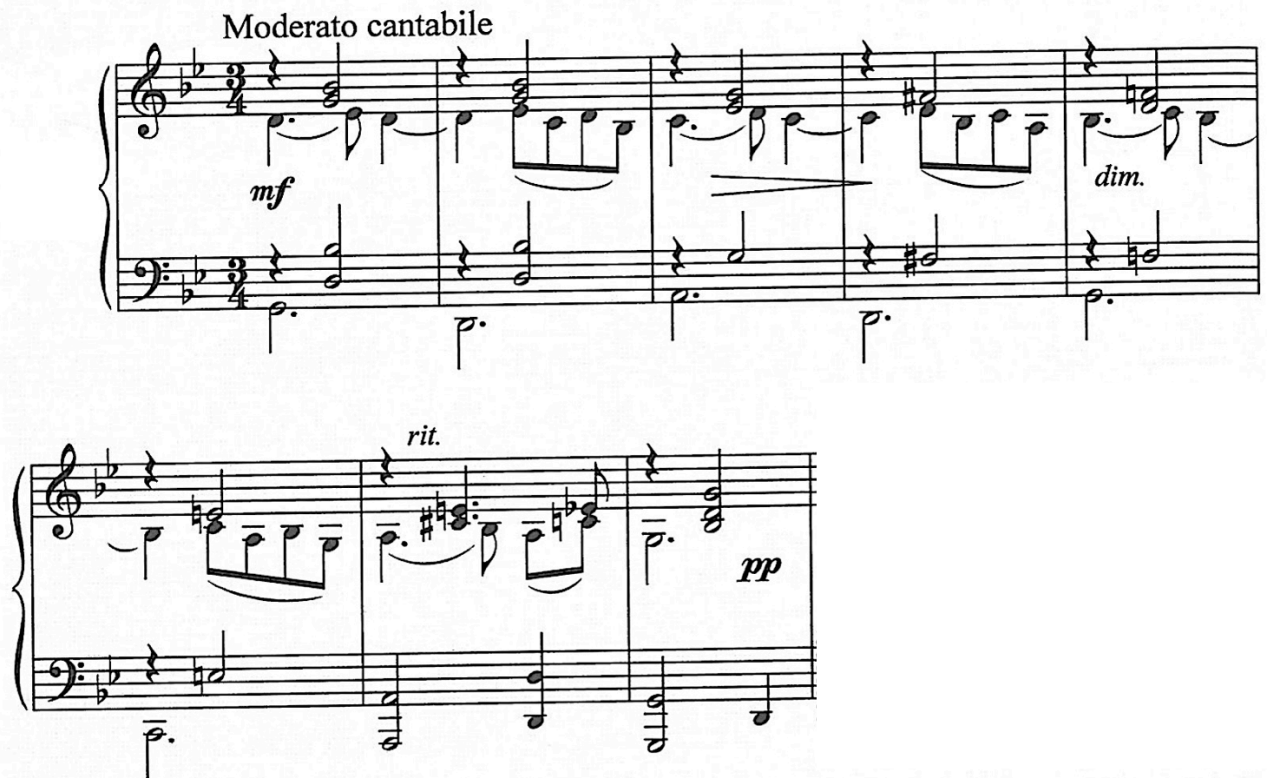


3.4 Introductions

One of the few techniques of arranging a folk tune for piano that doesn't involve altering the body of the tune itself is adding an introduction. Five of the pieces analyzed for the purposes of this thesis have introductions composed by the arranger himself. A systematic look at these five introductions allows one to discover different techniques of composing an introduction, which serves as an element of arranging a folk tune for the piano.

The first piece with an introduction is Babajanian's arrangement of "Kani Vour Jan Im", the folk tune by Sayat Nova. The introduction composed by Babajanian (figure 41) is, in fact, not a composition at all, but a mere statement of the first theme. As stated earlier, Babajanian uses the technique of enveloping the melody within the harmony, and he also places the chord on the second beat of each bar throughout the piece. These two techniques are also used in the introduction, along with the melody of the first theme of the folk tune.

Figure 41



Another simple introduction using the material of the main melody of a folk tune is found in both Naghtyan's and Soghomonian's arrangements of "Kele Kele" by Gomidas. In both cases, the introduction is the first phrase of the main melody, played monophonically, unaccompanied. While this seems very simplistic and redundant, it is actually an imitation of a lone villager singing it by himself, as mentioned earlier. As stated earlier, the fermata in the last measure of the introduction confirms the assumption of a single villager singing the main melody in these introductions, as the villager would probably stay on that final high note for an unidentified period of time.

Returning to "Kani Vour Jan Im" by Sayat Nova, Sarachian's arrangement also has an introduction. However, this introduction uses nothing from the main body of the folk tune, except – perhaps – for the tonality of E flat minor. I say *perhaps* because the introduction uses 20th century harmony and atonal chords, which do not provide a tonal framework of E flat minor (figure 42). This introduction sets the mood of the arrangement and introduces its basic elements, such as the crossover of hands and the 16th notes in the left hand, in addition to the general harmony of the piece.

Figure 42

Allegretto grazioso

sopra

p

cresc.

quasi staccato e distinto

A very short introduction is written by Bedrossian in his arrangement of Gomidas' "Kele Kele". In only two measures, and with nothing but the tonic chord (F Major), Bedrossian prepares the ground for the upcoming melody in F Major. The introduction is played only by the second piano and consists of the F Major tonic chord being played three times in the first measure at different registers of the piano in a rolled, harp-like manner. The second measure is the exact copy of the first measure. These arpeggiated chords attempt to mimic the kemenche, an original Armenian string instrument, which was one of the most important instruments played by the great Sayat Nova among other Armenian musicians. Thus Bedrossian also uses the element of representation in this succinct introduction (figure 43).

Figure 43

The image shows a musical score for two staves, labeled I and II. Both staves are in 4/4 time and marked "Larghetto, dolce". Staff I consists of two measures, each containing a whole rest. Staff II consists of two measures of music. The first measure of Staff II contains two eighth-note groups of two notes each, marked "mp". The second measure of Staff II contains two eighth-note groups of two notes each, also marked "mp".

Finally, an extremely elaborate introduction, rather an overture, is composed by Antreassyan for his arrangement of “Gakavi Yerke” by Gomidas. This overture uses 20th century harmony to present the eighth note groups of two notes each, imitating the sound of the partridge, as well as the typical accompaniment for this piece, which also strives to imitate the partridge. The eighth notes also serve as a percussive element resembling Armenian drumming. The second half of the overture has a descending harmonic sequence, which leads into the final part where a rhythmic imitation of the main melody is found before a two-bar stretch of an ascending chromatic scale in thirds (figure 44)

Figure 44

Vivace

leggero
pp

con *2a.*

The musical score is written for piano in B-flat major (two flats) and 2/4 time. It is marked 'Vivace' and 'leggero' with a dynamic of 'pp' (pianissimo). The tempo 'con 2a.' (seconda) is indicated. The score is organized into five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows the initial melodic and harmonic ideas. The second and third systems continue the development with various rhythmic patterns and fingerings. The fourth system introduces more complex passages with triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final cadence and repeat signs.

3.5 Accompaniment styles

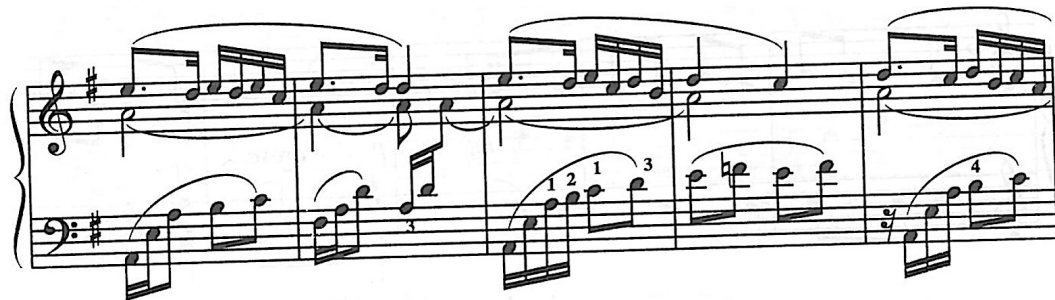
While the right hand generally plays the melody of the folk tune, notwithstanding the melodic and rhythmic variations that are added to it, the left hand provides the accompaniment. The comparative analysis of the 11 folk tunes shows some prevalent accompaniment styles that are worth mentioning.

3.5.1 Rhythmic accompaniment

The first accompaniment style is the rhythmic accompaniment. It was previously discussed that rhythmic accompaniments serve as a tool to represent Armenian folk percussion instruments. However, in and of themselves, they serve as an element of arrangements of folk tunes for the piano. At least four examples of rhythmic accompaniments can be found in the pieces analyzed for this thesis. For comparative purposes, two arrangements of “Kele Kele” and two arrangements of “Gakavi Yerke” will be analyzed.

Consider, for instance, the arrangement of “Kele Kele” by Lousinian. The series of alternations of 8th and 16th notes in the left hand create a percussive rhythm accompanying the main melody (figure 45).

Figure 45



Bedrossian’s arrangement of the same folk tune has even a more elaborate rhythmic accompaniment. First, the arrangement is for two pianos, and towards the end of it the first piano plays the melody in both hands with an alto line, while the second piano plays eighth and quarter notes in the left hand, while decorating the right

hand with 8th, 16th, and 32nd notes. The second piano part sounds like a drummer playing percussive rhythms to accompany the main melody (figure 46).

Figure 46

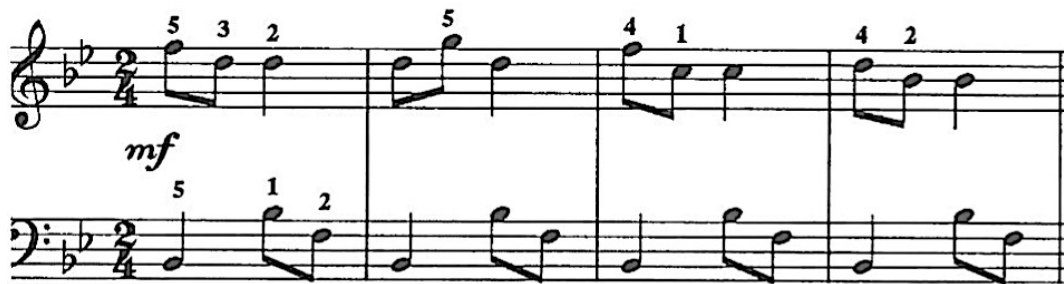


As for “Gakavi Yerke”, Soghomonian uses a “bass-chord” accompaniment style in the left hand (figure 47), while Apikian alternates eighth and quarter notes in opposition to the main melody, imitating the sound of the partridge, as discussed in the previous section (figure 48).

Figure 47



Figure 48



3.5.2 Progressively fuller accompaniment

A folk song is generally short and simple, and therefore, even if all the aforementioned elements of arrangement were to be employed, the final product wouldn't surpass the length of a couple of measures. Therefore, one of the elements of arrangement that composers use is writing a progressively fuller accompaniment to the same melody, which keeps repeating itself. Looking at Naghtyan's and Lousinian's arrangement of "Kele Kele", for example, one would realize that these are short pieces, lacking a repetition of the melody; whereas, the arrangement of the same folk tune by Bedrossian is much longer, and with each repetition of the main melody there is a progressively fuller accompaniment (see full score of "Kele Kele" by Bedrossian in Appendix A).

Another example would be "Kani Vour Jan Im" arranged by Babajanian. The whole folk song is repeated three times, and each time the accompaniment is fuller with octaves, chords, and an increased level of dynamics in each section (see full score of "Kani Vour Jan Im" by Babajanian in Appendix A). A final example would be "Karoun A" arranged by Antreassyan, where the accompaniment builds from 16th notes to 16th triplets, and even to 32nd notes at each repetition of the melody of the original folk tune (see full score of "Karoun A" by Antreassyan in Appendix A).

3.6 Other elements

In addition to the techniques of arrangements mentioned and discussed hitherto, other techniques also appear in the comparative analyses of these arrangements of Armenian folk tunes. These elements of arrangement deal with the pieces as a whole instead of dealing with specific elements of melody, rhythm, or harmony.

First, there is the level of difficulty. Aprikian, for instance, has opted to arrange “Gakavi Yerke” for a late beginner (or early intermediate) performer, while Antreassyan has arranged the same folk tune for an advanced pianist. While the Naghtyan, Soghomonian, and Lousinian arrangements of Gomidas’ “Kele Kele” could easily be played by a beginner, the Bedrossian arrangement of the same folk tune requires technical prowess and pianistic experience. As for “Kani Vour Jan Im”, both Babajanian and Sarachian versions are intended for a more advanced mature pianist or advanced musical student. The same holds true for “Karoun A” arranged by Chepodarian and Antreassyan, as both pieces are demanding and require skillful pianistic ability.

Two of the 11 arrangements discussed have each a special characteristic, which makes them different from other arrangements, while providing a rich idea for elements of arranging for the piano. Chepodarian has arranged “Karoun A” by Gomidas in the form of theme and variations, composing six variations for the main melody of the tune, while Bedrossian has arranged “Kele Kele” by Gomidas for two pianos. Full scores of all the aforementioned arrangements are found in the Appendix.

Conclusion

The journey of this thesis started with the wish to combine Armenian folk music, the music of my origin and motherland, with pieces composed for the piano, the instrument that I play, and therefore, this thesis focused on piano arrangements of Armenian folk tunes by Armenian composers.

The essential question, which initiated this study, was whether specific elements and techniques of arrangements exist, or whether composers simply take a folk tune and play it on the piano, adapting it to the capabilities and limitations of the instrument. Comparative analyses were done on 11 piano arrangements of Armenian folk tunes with the aim of finding elements of arrangements, particularly for the piano, that are commonly used by Armenian composers.

The 11 pieces analyzed are piano arrangements of four Armenian folk tunes, the composers of which are either Sayat Nova or Gomidas Vartabed, whereas the arrangements themselves are the work of nine different Armenian composers. These pieces were analyzed using within and between analyses, bearing in mind their level of difficulty, form, as well as melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and pianistic attributes. This thesis sought to discover different elements and techniques of arranging for the piano, which were common among different arrangements by different composers.

The comparative analysis performed at both the within and between levels showed that arranging folk tunes for the piano is not a haphazard, random process by Armenian composers. Rather, several elements were discovered that are common between arrangements of different composers. The technique of orchestral simulation on the piano, for instance, is used by almost all nine composers, albeit in different forms. Whether it is enveloping the melody within accompaniments, using ascending and descending chromatic lines, or writing alto lines, these Armenian composers have used the full potential of the piano to help imagine a full orchestra playing these folk tunes from within their arrangements.

When it comes to melodic alterations, Babajanian simply changes the first note of the phrase, while Antreassyan alters both notes and melody of the tune altogether. Chepodarian plays the main melody by augmentation, while Bedrossian plays it in octaves to give it more dynamics. The aforementioned techniques show that melodic alterations by notes and rhythm are elements of arrangements used when composing arrangements of folk tunes.

Another common element found through the analyses is that of representations. Aprikian and Antreassyan both use rhythmic patterns to imitate the sound of the partridge in their arrangements of “Gakavi Yerke”, while Lousinian and Naghtyan use monophonic introductions to imitate a lone villager singing the folk tune unaccompanied. Armenian folk instruments such as the dhol, zourna, and kemenche are also represented among the pages of the arrangements studied.

Different accompaniment techniques, such as rhythmic accompaniments and progressively fuller accompaniments, as well as introductions were found to be common elements used by most composers in their arrangements of the Armenian folk tunes analyzed in this thesis. Finally, the aforementioned elements were used whether for easy or difficult arrangements, short or long, theme and variations, or arrangement for two pianos.

Besides the analytical outcome, this thesis bore aims at the educational and cultural level as well. The educational aims have been met after the completion of the comparative analyses, as this thesis could serve as a methodological guide, teaching techniques of piano arrangements through popular folk tunes for composers and composition students. One is only to study the analyses performed in this thesis to learn which elements to use in order to arrange for the piano and how to use them.

Culturally, the aim of this thesis was to introduce Armenian folk tunes and composers to the Czech and international community at Charles University in Prague. While the names of Sayat Nova and Gomidas Vartabed might be familiar to the majority of the international community of musicians, names such as Babajanian, Sarachian, Chepodarian, Antreassyan, and the like are usually left in the shadow of the former composers. And equally, while “Sabre Dance” by Khachaturian is a well-

known tune amongst musical circles, arrangements and compositions by other composers mentioned in this thesis are lost in obscurity, let alone the original Armenian folk tunes, which lack international knowledge.

At this point, I cannot assert that the cultural aim of this thesis has been met. I only hope that the readers of this thesis would be introduced to a brief history of Armenian music in general and Armenian folk tunes in particular, familiarize themselves with the four folk tunes that were analyzed, and get to know important Armenian composers whose works were studied. As an Armenian born, raised, and currently living in the diaspora, it is my wish that my thesis would spark an interest towards Armenian music among its readers and fill them with the thirst to want to know more about the treasures hidden within the pages of Armenian history.

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Appendix

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|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sayat Nova | Kani Vour Jan Im |
| 2. Gomidas | Gakavi Yerke |
| | Karoun A |
| | Kele Kele |
| 3. Robert Antreassyan | Gakavi Yerke |
| | Karoun A |
| 4. Kayane Chepodarian | Karoun A |
| 5. Kevorki Sarachian | Kani Vour Jan Im |
| 6. Arno Babajanian | Elegy |
| 7. Stepan Nahgtyan | Kele Kele |

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 8. Garbis Aprikian | Gakavi Yerke |
| 9. Robert Bedrossian | Lorig: Kele Kele |
| 10. Arek Lousinian | Kele Kele |
| 11. Zareh Soghomonian | Gakavi Yerke |
| | Kele Kele |